

Will the Peace Plan Bring Peace to Afghanistan?

A look at the History of Nation and State Building in Afghanistan by the United States and
review of the 2020 Afghanistan Peace Plan

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Abstract:

How have the policies of counterterrorism and nation building by the United States impacted the nation of Afghanistan? Were the objectives completed and did American foreign policy decisions foster sustainable peace within the region? In this case study of Afghanistan, the role of the United States in the Soviet Resistance, the global war on terror, attempts at nation building, and the quest for peace will be discussed. Operation Enduring Freedom focused on combating Al-Qaeda and Taliban regime within Afghanistan, but soon evolved into something much more complex. Through reviewing the objectives and actions of United States' foreign policy makers, research of the implementation of policies, as well as reports from within Afghanistan, it was discovered that the initial threat of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda was removed. However, hopes of sustainable peace and a "Pro-America" Afghanistan were not established. Behind a blurred legal justification and ignoring the international community's warnings, the preemptive strikes in the global war on terror and attempt at nation building has created national instability and denied the opportunity for peace to exist within Afghanistan. Beginning covertly in the 1980's and publicly since 2001, the United States and coalition forces have been actively deployed and engaged in Afghanistan spending billions of dollars and losing thousands of lives, with minimal return on their investment.

Introduction:

For more than four decades, the nation of Afghanistan has known nothing, but violence only interrupted with small stints of peace. To that end, the United States has been involved in the violence since the days of the Mujahedeen in 1979 and continue to this day to be deployed for what objective? Rationale from preventing the spread of Communism, retaliation for the events of 9/11, pre-emptive self-defense, and state and nation building have all been used to justify the fiscal and physical costs of the United States being in Afghanistan. In the dawn of a new decade the sentiment has changed to leave, with what to show? Through all the violence and oppression, the Afghan citizens have been left to suffer under both the Soviet Union and the United States. Cities have been destroyed, infrastructure is seemingly non-existent, civil liberties are highly debated, and in the end the international perspective of the nation is bleak.

Throughout the discussion of Afghanistan there are certain concepts and terms that need to be defined as they are critical to the development of the argument and understanding of the ongoing situation. Although a recognizable term, terrorism does not have an internationally mutually agreed upon definition, thus the saying goes “one man’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter.” The Draft League of Nations Convention drafted the definition of; “All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.”¹ Another attempt to definite terrorism was “taking the agreed-upon definition of war crimes (comprising deliberate attacks on civilian, hostage taking and killing of prisoners) and extending it to peace time. Terrorism would then simply be defined as the “peacetime equivalents of war crimes.”² For this paper, I use the draft

¹ Conte, Alex. *Security in the 21st Century: The United Nations, Afghanistan and Iraq*. Aldershot: Ashgate Pub Co, 2007.

² Conte, Alex. *Security in the 21st Century: The United Nations, Afghanistan and Iraq*. Aldershot: Ashgate Pub Co, 2007.

definition of the Draft League of Nations Convention. The response to terrorism, known as, counterterrorism, and in this paper is regarded as the actions taken against willing participants or supporters of terrorists and terrorist organizations. Participation and support can come in multiple forms, including physical participation, logistical support through movement of individuals and supplies, as well as fiscal support. Counterterrorism operations include direct confrontation, fiscal actions such as freezing accounts and assets, cyber actions against communication networks, and establishing community relations. The topic of state-building is the process of developing and crafting a nation through the aid of a foreign contributor in critical components including political structures, economic diversity, establishment of civil liberties. State building is similar to the more widely used term, nation-building, but for this paper they will be used interchangeably. Nation-building “emphasizes the importance of cultural identity which may ultimately lead calls for self-determination”³ The final concept of sustainable peace is derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals where there are 17 individual goals that we promote to foster individual and communal lives for years to come. In order to come to the analysis and outlook for the United States, Taliban, Afghanistan Peace Agreement in 2020, a recent history of the Afghanistan and the involvement of the United States is required. This paper will chronologically address and recount the actions in Afghanistan focusing on the Taliban, Al Qaeda, the involvement of the United States starting with the USSR invasion in 1979. From there it will continue into the Civil War Period where the Taliban eventually came to power. The next section starts with the attacks of 9/11 and Operation Enduring Freedom. Closing with the discussion of peace talks, the future outlook of Afghanistan will be examined in accordance with current negotiations. After nearly forty years of involvement, has the United States succeed in its missions of counterterrorism

³ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

and state building within Afghanistan? Has the investment of billions of dollars, resource and the cost of thousands of American lives resulted in a benefit for the United States? What will the future of Afghanistan look like without the United States, do they have the means to prosper and perpetuate peace in the region or revert back into violence?

Literature Review:

As previously mentioned, state building focuses on the development and creation of a physical structure of a state through foreign aid in a variety of areas, but there have been multiple studies examining different approaches and success rates of state building. Often coupled with state building, is the term nation building which continues with similar trends but has a very specific set of goals as compared to state building. Within the discussion of state building and nation building there are primarily two actors, being the domestic natives and international actors. Each category has its own sub-groups as there can be majority and minorities that have either been advantaged or disadvantaged in the past. International actors can take multiple forms from foreign nations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or even Multinational Corporations (MNCs). In terms of different types of nation building different policies exist including assimilation policies, accommodation, exclusionary policies and population or local ownership.

First it is important to continue the discussion between state building and nation building as Zoe Scott outlined that over the years the interchangeable use of these terms has resulted in confusion. The study of state building is an interdisciplinary school drawing scholarship from topics such as political science, international relations, economics, security studies, international development and other social sciences.⁴ The focus of the state building is on the “interventionist

⁴ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

strategies to restore and rebuild the institutions and apparatus of the state.”⁵ A major component of state-building is the contribution and efforts of external factors or foreign nations. Due to the use of the term nation-building from “non-academic circles, particularly the media, donors, NGOs, and think tanks”⁶ there has been confusion between the terms often resulting in state building operations being labeled as nation building efforts. Nation building serves to look at a different topic but can be related to state building as it too works to establish something within a damaged or struggling nation. However instead of focusing on institutions, nation building focuses on “the creation of a cultural identity that relates to the particular territory of the state.”⁷ Instead of being fostered by an international actor, the national identity created through nation building “is inherently something only an emerging society can shape itself.”⁸ Nation building and state building have the ability to work together and state building can be even be seen as a piece of the nation building, but cannot be regarded as the same process.

In Heather Gregg’s “Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan,” she focuses on notions of sovereignty, population ownership, and national unity as key components of the process of state building. The first concept in her argument rests in the power and ownership of the people through sovereignty. Gregg claims that “now more than ever, a state’s sovereignty rests with its people, and without their buy-in, states are unlikely to thrive or governments to succeed over the long haul.”⁹ In international relations sovereignty is often referred to a nation’s

⁵ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

⁶ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

⁷ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

⁸ Scott, Zoe. “Literature Review on State-Building.” *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, May 2007.

⁹ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

individual right to govern within its own borders without fear of foreign interference. This source of governance and power rests in the people of the nation as “the ideas of the Enlightenment, and the revolution of information technologies have shifted sovereignty from governments and territories to the people.”¹⁰ This emphasis on the people is critical in creating lasting political institutions during state building as foreign assistance will not always be there while these should remain for centuries. Gregg believed that the people of the state are vital in the success as they not only serve as contributors in the process but should also benefit in the end. Expanding on the idea of sovereignty and the peoples’ power.

“State building efforts also need to start with and include populations in order to create programs that resonate with the population and give it ownership of the effort in the here and now, which will pave the way for a population that supports the state and its various institutions.”¹¹

The institutions built and developed during state building play in the vital role in protecting and promoting the people but will not lead to success without what Gregg calls “national-unity building.”¹²

Beyond the physical institutions and systems that are developed, Gregg argues that there needs to be national unity building where similar ideas and outlooks throughout the community are created. These ideas should be focused on their own and national future and where the “state needs a population that coheres and supports the government and other state institutions for it to flourish.”¹³ Gregg made it clear that there is more to state building than just the construction of institutions by a foreign party. Instead, a dynamic is required between the assistance and the native

¹⁰ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

¹¹ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

¹² Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

¹³ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

and in the end, it is the citizens of the nation that not only have the original source of power, but also the power to make the foreign efforts and assistance last for decades.

The involvement of the individual and people within a nation is the guiding principle in Thiessen Chuck's "Local Ownership of Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Shouldering Responsibility for Sustainable Peace and Development" through the theory of local ownership. Chuck explains that local ownership, "becomes a personal, as well as political, activity in war-torn contexts experiencing outside intervention."¹⁴ The two key concepts of local ownership in state building are the beliefs and actions of the citizens of the nation and then the foreign actions. Local ownership requires "that a country and its people decide for themselves what sort of peacebuilding activities are conducted and in what manner. As such it is both a process and an outcome in having local actors vitally engaged in peacebuilding design and action."¹⁵ However there is a struggle with the local ownership theory due to "the unproven nature of local ownership" and the fact that results "are largely unconfirmed empirically."¹⁶

In review of the theory the reality of implementation is recognized by Chuck usually due to the state of the nation as "there appears to be a major gap between the vision laid out... and the reality on the ground."¹⁷ One of the major questions who is part of the local group to decide the ownership of the nation. Additionally, the legitimacy of local groups can potentially create an issue due to the true intentions of these local groups and different standards in comparison to the foreign or international expectations. With all of these potential issues addressed by Chuck, it is important

¹⁴ Thiessen, Chuck. *Local Ownership of Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Shouldering Responsibility for Sustainable Peace and Development*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.

¹⁵ Thiessen, Chuck. *Local Ownership of Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Shouldering Responsibility for Sustainable Peace and Development*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.

¹⁶ Thiessen, Chuck. *Local Ownership of Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Shouldering Responsibility for Sustainable Peace and Development*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.

¹⁷ Thiessen, Chuck. *Local Ownership of Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Shouldering Responsibility for Sustainable Peace and Development*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.

to remember that local ownership promotes the sovereignty and places the future of a nation in the responsibility of the locals.

Mylonas Harris's "The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities" worked to address different approaches as well as certain circumstances that could be favorable for different parties during the nation building process. Harris focused on three policies she labeled as Assimilationist Policies, Accommodation, and Exclusionary Policies.¹⁸ Each of these policies' outcomes are dependent in domestic and international influences. The "goal of assimilationists policies is to secure the loyalty of an individual or a community by "conquering" their belief system and ensuring their obedience to the national state."¹⁹ This is often done through education, occupational, matrimonial, demographic, and political policies targeted at a specific group or the entire nation. Assimilation has the potential to be implemented through violence as well through colonialization by a non-core group, or an exclusion of a non-core group and forced assimilation for the rest of the members.²⁰ Accommodation work to establish minority groups which "are more or less respected and institutions that regulate and perpetuate these differences are put in place."²¹ These minority groups are granted rights and access to institutions but at the cost of national loyalty. The end result of this policy is the creation of nationally recognized minority groups. Harris's last policy was, exclusionary policies which "refer to policies that aim at the physical removal of a non-core group from a host state (or specific areas of it)."²² Tactics of

¹⁸ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

¹⁹ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²⁰ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²¹ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²² Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

this policy include population exchange, deportation, internal displacement, pogroms, or even mass killing. Each tactic has its own benefits and costs both physical and fiscal, and one measure of success can be based on security. The creation of institutions and systems in order to foster assimilation is much greater than the policy accommodation and enabling a minority to exist but if the assimilation is success the security risk is much lower than enabling a minority class to exist. In terms of exclusionary, the fiscal cost would depend on the systems used to target the non-core group, but the reputational cost and threat of security depending on the policies used potentially could outweigh the benefits.

With these three different policies there are also three different actors: the host state, non-core group, and external powers. According to Harris the host state is “the elites governing the national state in the name of the “core group” and this core group “refers to all the inhabitants of a country who share a common national type in one or more ways just outlined [official language, nation historiography, official religion, common cultural customs].”²³ The non-core group is a “group category who are conscious of their difference from the dominant national type without necessarily being mobilized around this difference” thus she reframes using the term minority as the non-core group is not a reference to population size. The final actor Harris discusses is the external power who can be “a neighboring state, a great power, a diaspora group, or a combination.”²⁴ External powers are the most important actors in nation building as they are the primary source of support such as; “financial, military, political and other support to the non-core

²³ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²⁴ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

group”²⁵ The success of nation building is the result depends on the relationship between these three actors and which of the three policies is used.

In her paper, Harris spent a great deal of time outlining the role of the external power and historically how external powers have behaved in nation building and the long term effects of external power intervention. For centuries, external powers have used their power to influence and gain control of territories from the Napoleonic Era to the 21st century in a post-Cold War era. It is important to create the distinction in external power with “external interference, which refers mainly to covert or clandestine operations during peace time, and external intervention, which refers to overt operations that take place once there is a conflict between a host state and a non-core group.”²⁶ Harris sites multiple viewpoints that are used to explain the reasoning of either interference or intervention including: “ethnic ties between the non-core group and the external power, psychology of the groups, relative power dynamic between the external power and the host state, democratization or humanitarian considerations, or to promote the external power’s preferred outcome.”²⁷ The actions of external powers, either interference or intervention, are the most important actions with the process of nation building as they will result in the relationship between the core and non-core groups in which Harris predicted multiple outcomes depending on varying circumstances.

The last component of Harris’s argument was her series of prediction and explanations for the outcomes of nation building depending on the relationship and circumstance between the core group, non-core group, and external powers. These predictions were broken up into categories

²⁵ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²⁶ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²⁷ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

focusing with domestic and internal categories. The domestic categories are: “Primordialism/Cultural Distance, States Reversal/Ethnic Antipathy, and Reputation”²⁸ while the international predictions are: “The Dark Side Democracy, and National Homeland”.²⁹ (See Figure 1 for explanation of each prediction.) Harris’s work on the actors and policies of nation building provides a framework as well as predictions of this concept to have a variety of outcomes depending on the parties involved that each have their own individual history.

While the individual components of nation and state building vary, it is important to understand the modern application and practice of nation-building since the conclusion of the Second World War. After the defeat of the Axis powers, the United States and the Allied powers began operations in Germany and Japan to reconstruct the war torn states in what Dodge calls “Westphalian peacekeeping.”³⁰ In the Westphalian peacekeeping model, “peacekeeping was used as a mechanism for great power management, imposing order on conflicts that threatened to destabilize the international system”³¹ and relied heavily on previously established foundations including established borders and defined states. In addition to these foundations, this model calls for an established nation to facilitate the nation building. Former President of the Council on Foreign Relations and formerly the director of policy planning for the state department during the invasion of Iraq, Richard Haass was a firm supporter of the Westphalian Peacekeeping model:

“It is one thing to oust a regime, quite another to put something better in its place. Prolonged occupation of the sort the United States carried out in Japan and West Germany

²⁸ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²⁹ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

³⁰ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

³¹ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

after World War II is the only surefire way to build democratic institutions and instill democratic culture.”³²

This model has merits, but there is also a criticism that the Westphalian model fails to address “that the success of external state-building is shaped by the preexisting conditions in the target state.”³³ Which begs the question what happens where established and recognized borders and nationalism are not present in the operation? In the wake of the Cold War and collapse of the USSR, these situations arose, and Dodge developed another model of peacekeeping.

However, at the conclusion of the Cold War, violence began to emerge across the Soviet satellites, and in these conflicts the Westphalian model could not be applied as previous borders were the source of this conflict due to ethnic tensions. At this same time, there became a greater sentiment for the use of international coalitions and organizations so the “1990s not only saw an increase in United Nations peacekeeping missions but also a steady expansion in the ambitious goals they were created to achieve.”³⁴ As a result the Westphalian model disappeared “‘post-Westphalian’ peacekeeping has gone through two subsequent transformations, from conflict resolution to peacebuilding, in an attempt to find increasingly complex solutions.”³⁵ Compared to the previous model that was a reaction to threats to the international system, the new era called for proactive conflict resolution and total development of the state and nation. Additionally, Dodge “estimates that of the 49 UN-mandated peacekeeping operations undertaken between 1989 and

³² Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

³³ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

³⁴ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

³⁵ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

2011, 34 had a commitment to state building in their remit.”³⁶ As the world shifted into the 21st century, the situations continue to increase in complexity, with more factors and actors which need to be addressed in order to have a successful nation building mission. Regardless the local ownership principles from Chuck and sovereignty of local populations ideas from Gregg need to be considered whether the Westphalian or Post-Westphalian model is being applied.

Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan:

Although originally disputed within the ranks of the Union of the Soviet Social Republics, in 1979 the Soviet military officially launched its invasion of Afghanistan and began an era foreign influence within the nation. At this point the Soviets were actively preparing for a conflict with the United States and as a result of a military build-up, readily possessed an occupational force. In “December 27th, 1979, there were 50,000 Soviet forces in Afghanistan, with 5,000 troops and Spetsnaz, the Soviet Union’s elite special forces, in position around Kabul.”³⁷ Soon after, the Soviets were able to seize the capital in Kabul and put in place Babrak Karmal. Karmal and the Soviets were not peacefully received across the nation and instead the invasion turned into a “decade long war that followed, it is believed that a million Afghans were killed and five million became refugees. Soviet bombers wiped whole villages off the map.”³⁸ Although violence waged throughout the countryside, urban life in Afghanistan flourished under Soviet control.

While the Soviets entered with tanks and bombers, once they reached the urban cities their tactics took a different turn as they began to support native Afghan civilians. For instance, in

³⁶ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

³⁷ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

³⁸ Gopal, Anand. *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes*. New York, NY: Picador, 2015.

Anand Gopal's interview with Heela, a native Afghan woman who was a teenager when the Soviets arrived, she indicated she had access to education, healthcare, and housing that had never been seen before. In her words, "they (Soviets) helped build Kabul. We liked them for that... There was complete freedom in those days... No one could tell a woman where to go or what to do."³⁹ When she was seventeen she was accepted into Kabul University to major in economics and upon the completion of her degree she was hired as a teacher while also working for the World Health Organization as a mid-wife. She was even able to have a say in her own marriage that broke the traditional practice of parental arrangement. Urban life under the Soviets represented a modernized and almost Western point of view, but these practices were not carried out of the cities. Outside the cities, the Soviets were faced with a daunting task of controlling the mountainous countryside that was home to Afghan citizens who did not share the same perspective as Heela. Within the urban centers of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union successfully accomplished state building missions with expanded access to education and employment. These missions were not carried out into the rural areas of Afghanistan, as for the better part of the decade there was constant armed conflict between the Soviets and Afghans.

Under the Soviet Union, the nation building techniques used in Afghanistan would be labeled as "National Homeland" with a non-core ruling party. While the Soviets held control of Afghanistan, they held a puppet government that ignored the principles Gregg called for with the source of national sovereignty coming for the people.⁴⁰ Although a population of Afghanistan, such as Heela, benefitted from the Soviet leadership, the core group of Afghanistan did not share the same opinions. The Soviets based their Afghan policies on assimilation within the major cities

³⁹ Gopal, Anand. *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes*. New York, NY: Picador, 2015.

⁴⁰ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2018.

such as Kabul by increasing access to a variety of services. These state building missions were a success within the cities, but they lacked widespread assimilation to the entire core group throughout the nation especially in the rural mountains.⁴¹ Acting as the external power, the Soviets used their direct force to gain control over Afghanistan, but they failed to achieve nationwide attempts at nation building or state building which plagued their occupation.

Resistance Against the Soviets:

During the initial stages of the Soviet occupation, there was a significant population of Afghans who fled into neighboring Pakistan, which created a unique population. By the mid-1980's there was thousands of young Muslims who had lost their homes, sometimes parents, in search of guidance and already practicing Muslims. It was with this population the local madrassas were able to benefit the most and enlarge their sphere of influence into the Afghan youth that lacked an identity.⁴² Located in Pakistan, these madrassas provided Islamic education through their own interpretation of sacred texts and lifestyle practices. The power of these Madrassas was soon recognized not only by the members within the various bodies, but also actors you sought to gain influence in Afghanistan against the Soviets. Although each school have differences in leadership, objectives, and tribal history, the greatest importance across the Madrassas was removing the Soviets from Afghanistan and they united under the name Mujahedeen.⁴³ Initially foreign support was covert through fiscal support from Saudi Arabia and logistical support of Pakistan, however involvement became overt when the power of the Mujahedeen movement was recognized. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan became to take a larger role in the establishment of training facilities and tactical training. Then "as it became clear that the Afghan War was hurting

⁴¹ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁴² Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

⁴³ Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

the Soviets, the United States began to covertly support the Afghan insurgents,”⁴⁴ thus the United States began its saga into Afghanistan.

Since the end of World War II, the United States had been engaged in the Cold War against the Soviet Union, resulting in numerous proxy wars across the globe, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan promoted another opportunity for the US to oppose the Soviets. At this point the 40th President and Commander in Chief, Ronald Regan’s goal was to end the Cold War with a victory for the United States. Early on, the US was covertly providing “about \$60 million per year to the Afghan Mujahideen between 1981 and 1983,”⁴⁵ but that was just the beginning. Seth Jones attributes Charlie Wilson as a “major catalyst... who saw the war as a chance to punish the Soviet Union for Vietnam” and with his congressional efforts, US support to the Mujahideen exponentially increased. By the end it is estimated that the United States spent anywhere between \$4 billion and \$5 billion between 1980 to 1992, which was matched the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in nearly \$4 billion in support to the Mujahideen. United States aid was handled by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):

The CIA was deeply involved in the distribution of wealth, providing money, arms (including heavy machine guns, SA-7s [Stinger Missile], and Oerlikon anti-aircraft cannons), technical advice on weapons and explosives, strategic advice, intelligence, and sophisticated technology such as wireless interception equipment.⁴⁶

With billions in international resources the Mujahideen evolved from a refugee force into a modernized military. The native knowledge of the region and landscape coupled with modern military technology continued to deny the Soviets the ability to control all of Afghanistan. At its

⁴⁴ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

⁴⁵ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

⁴⁶ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

peak strength the Mujahideen had a force of over 30,000 drawing forces from across the Muslim world, who successfully drove the Soviets out by the end of 1989.

When examining the policies used by the Soviets there were attempts in state building through the construction of schools and infrastructure within the urban centers. Communist development policies provided new opportunities for Afghans that did not exist before the invasion. However, these state building attempts were strictly confined to urban centers mainly due to the Mujahideen's control of rural Afghanistan. These institutions only had hope to survive while the Soviets maintained control of the cities and backed the government. However, this rigid control prevented any true opportunities for nation building within. Barbark Kamal and later Doctor Najibullah were part of a non-core group from an elite class of Afghanistan that benefitted from Soviet control as compared to the core group of the nation that lived in the rural areas where the Soviets constantly bombarded. The policies were highly exclusionary and only benefitted the non-core group in order to protect the domestic reputation of those in power.⁴⁷ With minimal success in state building and no real attempts in nation building providing avenues for the core group of Afghanistan to have success, Soviets had no lasting impact.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was critical to the future of the nation in terms of international relationships and domestic control. The rise of Mujahideen resulted in an Islamically radicalized and militarized youth both within Afghanistan and through the Muslim World. Muslims traveled all the way from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and North Africa all to aid in the fight, and once the fighting subsided, they either returned to their homeland with connections and

⁴⁷ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

resources or remained in Afghanistan, as residents with no ties to their host nation.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there was an investment of over \$10 billion dollars into the Mujahideen to create an army to combat the Soviets with no training in running a government and establishing an infrastructure. The short-term objective of the West was defeating the Soviets by creating violence and chaos. And it lacked a long-term objective of establishing a functioning state.

Civil War and the Rise of the Taliban:

With the departure of the Soviet Forces in 1989, an absence of power and control of Afghanistan quickly emerged as Najibullah's regime lost its strength and collapsed in 1992 bringing the country into a spiral of violence. Even with the violence in the rural regions of Afghanistan, the Soviet government was able to provide security and stability in the urban centers for the majority of the nation's population. However, with the fall of Soviet-backed government there was an absence of authority throughout the nation. Due to this, the tribal history of Afghanistan expressed itself with the rise in regional warlords who began to amass more power. Warlords quickly secured total control of urban centers and attacked the institutions created by the Communist Soviet government. Schools, workplaces, and the social atmosphere in the cities created by the communists were violently targeted. Gopal's interview with Heela continued into the civil war years of Afghanistan where she recounted that, "I went to sleep expecting to die... and woke up thankful for another day. We focused very hard on our prayers because that's all we had."⁴⁹ Under the Soviets urban Afghans enjoyed access to the new opportunities due to state building objectives. Life dramatically changed for the residents of these cities as they were forced

⁴⁸ Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

⁴⁹ Gopal, Anand. *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes*. New York, NY: Picador, 2015.

to adapt to the new norms imposed by warlords or suffered violent actions which warlords used to solidify their power.

While warlords scrambled for power in the wake of the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, a group founded from the Mujahideen, known as the Taliban, began to emerge within Pakistan. Founded in 1994, and translated roughly to “the student,” the Taliban was established to create an Islamic State in Afghanistan. They believed in strict adherence to Shar’ia and prohibited anything that was deemed as Un-Islamic.⁵⁰ The Taliban had the means to provide peace and security in Afghanistan, in exchange for the imposition of their Muslim jurisprudence. Taliban forces systemically worked to collect power and land throughout Afghanistan through direct force, the threat of force, and establishing agreements with warlords. As veterans of the war against the Soviets, Taliban forces had the military experience and organizational infrastructure to maintain control throughout Afghanistan. In 1996 the Taliban officially took control of the government of Afghanistan and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Life under the Taliban required strict adherence to the Taliban’s unique Shia Islamic jurisprudence through the threat and use of force. According to Jones, “the Taliban’s religious ideology was particularly apparent in Kabul, a city that most Taliban viewed as modern, implacably corrupt, and bubbling with apostasy.”⁵¹ In fact “on September 28, 1996, Radio Kabul announced: ‘Thieves will have their hands and feet amputated, adulterers will be stoned to death and those taking liquor will be lashed.’”⁵² The Taliban brought security and stability to

⁵⁰ Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

⁵¹ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

⁵² Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

Afghanistan which had not existed since before the Soviet invasion in 1979. As an “external power,” the Taliban worked to build their version of a state through Ethnic Antipathy where a “once a previously disadvantaged group takes control of the state, its ruling political elites are likely to target the previously advantaged group(s) with exclusionary policies.”⁵³ By using their strict interpretation of Shar’ia, the Taliban were able to target those who benefitted from the Soviets in the urban centers where women were able to benefit from state building efforts. Individuals who served in the Afghan government before the invasion were also targeted by the Taliban. By using local warlords, they in fact were able to secure legitimate sovereignty from the people due to the tribal nature of Afghanistan. They rigidly implemented assimilation policies to “secure the loyalty of an individual or a community by “conquering” their belief system and ensuring their obedience to the national state.”⁵⁴ By implementing their jurisprudence of Shar’ia, the Taliban focused less on the state building but instead on security and stability as evident in their interactions with Afghan citizens.

It is important to note that during this time the United States changed their foreign policy focus away from Afghanistan. The Taliban had a near enemy agenda that did not reference an anti-Western version of fundamentalism. Due to the complications in other international actions such as the Balkans and in Somalia, a secure Afghanistan was not a pressing concern in United States foreign policy. The Taliban focused on order within Afghanistan, another organization known as the Al ’Qaeda originated from the Mujahedeen as well with a different end goal.

Rise and tactics of the Al ’Qaeda:

⁵³ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁵⁴ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

After the removal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, thousands of experienced Muslim soldiers had the training and means for combat but suddenly lacked an enemy, until some turned towards for the far enemy.⁵⁵ The leading body in this push to fight the far enemy were the Al 'Qaeda forces, which were led by Osama Bin Laden. As an experienced Saudi Arabian financier with connections throughout the Muslim world, Bin Laden saw an opportunity to develop and spread his own jurisprudence of Islam through Al 'Qaeda forces. Published in their original manifesto in 1988 Bin Laden and the Al 'Qaeda, which translates as "the Base"⁵⁶ had the goal of removing all non-Muslims from Muslim states and to destroy all Muslim regimes that did not align with their jurisprudence. Furthermore, they sought to defeat the Far Enemy both within the Muslim countries and beyond. In the fight against the Far enemy various methods were used ranging from suicide bombers, planted explosives, and other means of unconventional warfare in order to spread fear.

The label of Far enemy by the Al 'Qaeda applied to both geography, origin of beliefs, and political ideals. For example, the United States, United Kingdom, and the rest of the Western world was under this label due to their distant location to the Muslim World. They speak different languages, have different traditions, and often practice different faiths, while when even Muslims in these countries. According to members of Al 'Qaeda, Muslims would live in the West, in nations regarded as the far enemy, do not follow the proper jurisprudence. Although geographically part of the Muslim world, Israel was another state deemed the far enemy due to its relationship with the West and its large Jewish population. There have been decades of violence against Muslims

⁵⁵ The term far enemy is a label used to classify individuals and states that typically value what are considered "western values" which are Un-Islamic in the eyes of the Al 'Qaeda. The term near enemy is another label that is applied to secular Muslim regimes because of the perceived fundamental difference between secularism and democracy with Islam.

⁵⁶ Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

was committed by Jewish Israelis with Western military technology. Finally, any nation or group that supported democracy also received the same label as the far enemy as, according to the Al 'Qaeda, democracy fundamentally disagrees with Islam. Within the Muslim faith, one of the pillars is the oneness of God and his absolute sovereignty. This means that Allah has the ultimate power, and nothing is more powerful than his decisions and his right to rule over everything. However, in democracy the power is placed in the hands of the people and their decision-making process which in essence would remove power from Allah in the Muslim world. In order to combat this, the Al 'Qaeda began to label Muslim democracies or nations that worked with Western democracies and shared similar beliefs as near enemies in order to justify their violence.

Although the group's base of operation was in flux throughout its early years of operation, Bin Laden was able to create a complex terrorist organization that demonstrated its capabilities quickly. In the 1990s Al 'Qaeda operations had moved to Sudan and there were vast connections established throughout the Middle East and Africa. Bin Laden was able to move funds throughout the Muslim world through the hawala system, which is honor based system that does not require the direct transfer of funds. While based in Sudan, members of Al 'Qaeda successfully carried out multiple attacks including the bombing of the USS Cole and United States Embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania.⁵⁷ Additionally, there was an attack in 1993 on the World Trade Centers in New York City. It must be noted that Ramzi Yousef the main perpetrator of this bombing had no direct ties to Al 'Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden but was the nephew to Khalid Sheikh Mohammad the mastermind behind the attacks on 9/11. In 1996, Al 'Qaeda operations returned back to Afghanistan through a mutually beneficially relationship with the Taliban which led Islamic

⁵⁷ Mandaville, Peter G. *Islam and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

Emirate of Afghanistan. While in their early years of operating their country, the Taliban had found themselves with a shortage of capita. In exchange for funding from the Al 'Qaeda, the Taliban granted large amounts of land to Bin Laden where large training camps were rapidly constructed. By the turn of the century, Osama Bin Laden believed that “the Americans were paper tigers who could be made to run in less than twenty-four hours.”⁵⁸ With this mindset, Bin Laden believed that he had the capacity to launch an offensive attack against the United States without fear of retaliation. Through this relationship both members benefitted as Al 'Qaeda training capacity increased without interference while the Taliban gained access to needed funds that were required to maintain security and stability in the early years of their governance.

9/11 and US Response:

Leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan directly after 9/11, it is important to note the disparity of opinions amongst United States foreign policy makers towards Afghanistan and the greater Middle East and west Asian region. Under President Clinton, the United State engaged in a variety of international operations with goals of state and nation building. Although there were successes, American lives and billions of dollars were lost which began to change some opinions in Washington D.C. Now in the wake of a direct attack on American soil, these varying opinions began to arise. David Petraeus, a four-star US Army General who oversaw Operation Enduring Freedom “notes that ‘(o)ne cannot adequately address the challenges in Afghanistan without adding Pakistan into the equation.”⁵⁹ Additionally, Petraeus believes that “those seeking to help Afghanistan and Pakistan need to widen the aperture even further, to encompass at least the Central

⁵⁸ Gregg, Gary L. “George W. Bush: Foreign Affairs.” Miller Center. University of Virginia , September 23, 2020. <https://millercenter.org/president/gwbush/foreign-affairs>.

⁵⁹ Berger, Mark T, and Justin Y Reese. “From Nation-States in Conflict to Conflict in Nation-States: The United States of America and Nation Building from South Vietnam to Afghanistan.” *International Politics* 47, no. 5 (2010): 451–71.

Asian states, India, Iran, and even China and Russia.”⁶⁰ However these values were not shared as the original sentiment from President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld did not reflect the previous president of the US. It soon became apparent after 9/11 that “the initial interventions were not a response to civil war or to support a peace settlement and were not triggered by requests from inside the country they ‘are profoundly different from those of most state building operations.”⁶¹ The United States operations in Afghanistan began as a counterterrorism mission, but the overall mission was become greater than that.

While the Al 'Qaeda had already been labeled as a terrorist organization according to the US State Department and taken the lives of United States citizens, the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001 forever changed the image and opinion of the Al 'Qaeda. When American Airlines flight 11 and United Airlines flight 175 struck the World Trade Center towers, American Airlines flight 77 at the Pentagon, and United Airlines flight 93 in rural Pennsylvania on its way to the White House, Bin Laden and all of Al 'Qaeda became the top enemy in the war on terror. In the end, nearly 3,000 lives were lost that morning on American soil and that required a rapid response in the eyes of the American public. In early planning the United States reached out to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and then Emir Mullah Omar in regard to their relationship with Al 'Qaeda. An ultimatum was presented where the Taliban could either maintain a relationship with the United States or the Al 'Qaeda. However, “the Taliban refused the Bush Administration’s

⁶⁰ Berger, Mark T, and Justin Y Reese. “From Nation-States in Conflict to Conflict in Nation-States: The United States of America and Nation Building from South Vietnam to Afghanistan.” *International Politics* 47, no. 5 (2010): 451–71.

⁶¹ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous State building: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

demand to extradite Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden”⁶² and Emir Mullah Omar sided with Bin Laden and his forces.

Directly after the events on 9/11, “General Tommy Frank’s war plan, which became known as Operation Enduring Freedom,”⁶³ was adopted by President Bush as plan to defeat the Al’Qaeda and Taliban, but also ensure security in Afghanistan. On October 7th, 2001 the first US operatives were deployed to Afghanistan to begin this new era of warfare against an enemy that was not a nation.⁶⁴ General Tommy Frank’s war plan included four phases. This first phase required unconventional tactics in the beginning, United States Special Operations soldiers along with members of the CIA worked with and increased the fighting capacity of the Northern Alliance which had resisted the Taliban governance of Afghanistan. US forces provided training, weapons, and direction action support. Imbedded as a free-lance reporter with the Northern Alliance, Sarah Chayes remembers when the Alliance hoped that “maybe the Americans will give us some [weapons]”⁶⁵ and the next morning a CIA truck arrived with “some six hundred brand-new Kalashnikovs and machine guns and grenade launchers- straight from Pakistan.”⁶⁶ The second phase relied on the use of established airfields in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, along with the USS Enterprise and USS Carl Vinson, both aircraft carriers, which allowed the United States the ability to provide overwhelming air support which could not be countered on the ground by the Al’Qaeda. In fact, “according to the U.S. Air Force, during the initial 76 days of bombing, some 6,500 strike

⁶² Clayton, Thomas. “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy.” *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, July 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/R45818>.

⁶³ Gregg, Gary L. “George W. Bush: Foreign Affairs.” Miller Center. University of Virginia, September 23, 2020. <https://millercenter.org/president/gwbush/foreign-affairs>.

⁶⁴ Clayton, Thomas. “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy.” *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, July 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/R45818>.

⁶⁵ Chayes, Sarah. *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan after the Taliban*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2007.

⁶⁶ Chayes, Sarah. *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan after the Taliban*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2007.

sorties were flown, with 17,500 dropped on over 520 targets.”⁶⁷ While Special Forces continued their partnered attacks with the Northern Alliance, the conventional military was mobilizing for an invasion of Afghanistan.

The third phase of Operation Enduring Freedom was the invasion of Afghanistan, which had a clear mission set and was successful due strength and capabilities of United States forces. In the original plans for the invasion were to remove the Taliban from power, destroy all Al 'Qaeda forces, and to destroy all training camps. This invasion marked the beginning of the global war on terror as the enemy in this fight was a terrorist organization that was going to be combatted by a multinational coalition. The United States received military assistance from NATO countries and also had support of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) through UNSC Resolution 1368 on September 12th, 2001 which stated support for the “readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the September 11 attacks.”⁶⁸ In October, US forces including soldiers and marines made it to Afghanistan to begin their objectives. In the early days of combat it was clear there was an advantage on the side of the United States as Bin Laden’s Al 'Qaeda forces were unable to sustain their defenses. The overwhelming fire from an advanced mechanized military force was unmatched.

Within a few months the United States and the Northern Alliance were able to defeat the Al 'Qaeda forces and successfully remove the Taliban from power. On December 9th, 2001, President George H.W. Bush announced to the American people that the United States had been victorious in Afghanistan. On December 5th 2001, through a CIA satellite phone, Hamid Karzai

⁶⁷ Zenko, Micha. “Tracking Eight Years of Airstrikes in Afghanistan.” Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, January 8, 2015. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/tracking-eight-years-airstrikes-afghanistan>.

⁶⁸ Clayton, Thomas. “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy.” *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, July 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/R45818>.

received a phone call that he was to become the new President of Afghanistan. As a member of the Northern Alliance, he had resisted the rule of the Taliban but in the eyes of the West had the skills to run this newly liberated nation. He was not the only Afghan that received a phone call that day, as a conference in Bonn, Germany held by the UNSC selected an entire cabinet of Afghan natives to run the new nation. This was the first major state building action by the international community by working to establish a functioning hierarchy of government with specific roles. The UNSC outlined a full cabinet for the Afghan government as the first step to build the Afghan State. This was a clear action of state building by the UNSC in an effort to create a permanent system of Afghan citizen lead government. However, these individuals would not be left alone to govern as the United States began to deviate from its original mission set after victory was declared on December 9th, 2001.

Reconstruction of Afghanistan Under President Bush:

Before looking at the actions taken by the Bush Administration after the initial defeat of the Taliban and Al ‘Qaeda, the beliefs of Bush and his cabinet need to be addressed. Before the events on 9/11, as a Republican President in his first year his domestic policy echoed the call from “U.S. conservatives stressing reducing the size of the state sector, free market solutions to public policy problems, and the unintended consequences and negative externalities generated by large government programs.”⁶⁹ This is an important message to consider as he campaigned and was elected on the mission of reducing big government policies both domestic and abroad. This principle remained true even after the attacks on 9/11:

⁶⁹ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

There would be no ‘foreign policy as social work’, no extended forays into the nation building that had bogged the Clinton Administration down in far-flung countries that were of little direct interest to the US. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Bush repeated this injunction, ‘I don’t want to nation-build with troops.’⁷⁰

Although General Frank’s four-part plan had a fourth phase which called for stability and security in Afghanistan, the early message for the invasion of Afghanistan was purely retaliation and revenge for the attack on US soil. When Payne writes “less than three weeks before the attack, President Bush asked the national-security advisor Condoleezza Rice, “Who will run the country?” It was a moment of panic for her because she had not given the issue any thought.”⁷¹ It is evident that state building in Afghanistan was an afterthought in Operation Enduring Freedom.

In December of 2001 there were 1,300 US troops in Afghanistan with a retreating Al ’Qaeda and a scattered Taliban regime, and the final phase of establishing stability and security was set to begin with no real plan. Soldiers and Marines who were trained and prepared for sustained combat no longer had an apparent enemy. Instead, these military forces were forced to transform into a variety of roles including police force, construction workers, government advisors, and instructors on how to build a “free society.” They lacked the training and experience on how to be successful nation builders. In an interview with Tommy Furlough, a retired Marine Captain from the 6th Regiment who was deployed in Afghanistan, he described his experiences where he was trained as an infantry man whose training centered around the ideal of “being a fighting force who essentially is trained in killing our way out of problem.”⁷² However in 2002 he was forced to “figure it out on the fly”, when his mission changed to rebuilding a village and assisting in establishing the authority of the Afghan Government. The mission became increasingly difficult

⁷⁰ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁷¹ Payne, James L. “Does Nation Building Work?” *The Independent Review* X, no. 4 (2006).

⁷² *Stories from the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, from Two Combat Veterans. Meat Grinder Documentary.* YouTube, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaMiqJ9GLjt4FE69BO-dBqg>.

due to lack of resources in critical areas such as “for its first four months of existence, from December 2001 to March 2002, Hamid Karzai’s provisional government had no budget to pay civil servants or police officers.”⁷³ Captain Furlough was not alone in these efforts and for over a year US forces attempted to rebuild Afghanistan under a Commander in Chief who “openly repeated this injunction, ‘I don’t want to nation-build with troops.’”⁷⁴

However, as the US remained involved in Afghanistan due to the resilience of Al’Qaeda and the Taliban, the complexity of the mission became apparent. According to Monten, “in the National Security Council meetings there was a working assumption that US troops would be withdrawn as soon as possible.”⁷⁵ In 2003, after being actively engaged in Afghanistan, President Bush states in a speech that, “there was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong.”⁷⁶ When looking at this comparison, it is a clear example of President Bush attempt to label the mission in Afghanistan as a Westphalian peacekeeping operation. President Bush was naïve to assume that the population of Afghanistan possessed the same understand of nationalism and statehood that German and Japanese citizens. By waiting over a year to recognize and identify the need for an increase in the investment in Afghanistan, the President Bush and the United States were not in an advantageous position in their state building effort. To that end, without state building there was no means to begin to the much more complex mission of nation building and constructing a form

⁷³ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁷⁴ Dodge, Toby. “Intervention and Dreams of Exogenous Statebuilding: The Application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (October 8, 2013): 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210513000272>.

⁷⁵ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁷⁶ Payne, James L. “Does Nation Building Work?” *The Independent Review* X, no. 4 (2006).

of national identity and citizenship. The interim government of President Karzai lacked the resources to gain the full trust of the Afghan people.

In late 2003, another four-part plan was developed by the United States to build the nation of Afghanistan. This plan was multifaceted and encompassed the actions of local ownership and emphasizing the sovereignty of the Afghan population. The policy included:

“‘the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections.’ ‘Our objective is to enable the Afghan government to stand on its own feet, to ... put in place an effective government.’ ‘Our focus is to work with the Afghan government to improve the quality of life of the people and to put in place an economic infrastructure to support a private sector-led economy, development of Afghan security institutions, with the rapid and extensive Expansion of the Afghan National Army.’”⁷⁷

In order to accomplish this new mission, there was a call for greater international collaboration with the help of NATO and other partner nations. The United States and coalition forces were able to facilitate a legitimate election where President Karzai was re-elected. However, according to the Bush administration in 2006, the US role has evolved and expanded as the coalition support began to waiver. In the Fall of 2006, there was an order for “a troop increase from about 20,000 to more than 30,000” as “the United States more than doubled funding for reconstruction, increased the size of the Afghan National Army, expanded intelligence efforts, and worked to reduce corruption in the new Afghan government.”⁷⁸ In regard to the wavering coalition support, Canadian political scientist, Roland Paris authored the article, “NATO’s Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or

⁷⁷ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁷⁸ Gregg, Gary L. “George W. Bush: Foreign Affairs.” Miller Center. University of Virginia, September 23, 2020. <https://millercenter.org/president/gwbush/foreign-affairs>.

Go Home,” where he called “for an honest reckoning of NATO’s progress in Afghanistan.”⁷⁹ He cited a RAND corporation study that investigated the relationship between troop numbers of nation builders and the host population. The study found that “In Afghanistan, the ratio is a paltry 1.4 per 1,000.” He believed that it “is not enough, as events have amply demonstrated. Adding 20,000 more troops in Afghanistan would raise the ratio to about 2 per 1,000 inhabitants.”⁸⁰ Additionally he references the study where “in Germany after the Second World War there were 101 Allied troops per 1,000 people.”⁸¹ In conclusion, Paris had a pessimistic outlook on NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan:

The defeat will come slowly, not on the battlefield but in the minds of ordinary Afghans, most of whom simply want security and opportunity for themselves and their families. If the legitimately elected government of Afghanistan and its foreign backers cannot provide such essentials, Afghans will look elsewhere. That is exactly what the Taliban and their allies are counting on.⁸²

Therefore, while President Bush claimed that the effort in Afghanistan was that of the United States effort in Germany, there was failure to provide the necessary resources of the same scale leaving Paris to wonder how the same result is expected.

Under the President Bush the emphasis of state building was focused on the security of the state and supporting President Karzai. The two main goals in state building in Afghanistan after the Taliban left office were to establish a new government and to gain security of the state. When looking at the Afghan government the “U.S. intervention focused both on expanding the scope of

⁷⁹ Paris, Roland. “NATO’s Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home.” Policy Options, December 1, 2006. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

⁸⁰ Paris, Roland. “NATO’s Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home.” Policy Options, December 1, 2006. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

⁸¹ Paris, Roland. “NATO’s Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home.” Policy Options, December 1, 2006. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

⁸² Paris, Roland. “NATO’s Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home.” Policy Options, December 1, 2006. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

the Afghan state and on building the strength of Afghan institutions.”⁸³ This was due to the fact that the “Afghan state was historically small in both scope and strength, often providing a minimal degree of security and a basic economic system.”⁸⁴ As a result the United States invested heavily in the expansion of the Afghan state with increased services in education, civil service, and local government. However, Monten argued that “the international intervention created a state that was both “overcentralized” and “underresourced.”⁸⁵ This led to the creation of an inefficient state that slowly began to be taken over with corruption and inability. There was not much success either in the other goal of security:

In terms of establishing security, the United States, NATO, and the Afghan government struggled to defeat the Taliban-led insurgency, and despite a large U.S. investment in training national military and police forces, these forces have struggled to operate effectively independent of U.S. support.⁸⁶

By being reliant on external actors for security, the legitimacy of the Afghan government continued to suffer. When looking at the state building efforts under President Bush, through the criteria of scholars, the United States had early success but as time went on the sentiment shifted. Gregg wrote about local ownership and a host population’s willingness to work with state building efforts.⁸⁷ In the beginning, there was a strong connection between the United States and the Afghan people so much that they celebrated when US forces entered Kabul. All signs pointed to the

⁸³ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁸⁴ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁸⁵ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁸⁶ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁸⁷ Gregg, Heather Selma. *Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac. Books, Incorporated, 2018.

opportunity for success, however as time went on and the interim government was assigned offices the local “buy-in” began to waiver. After the government inefficiencies became even more apparent, the criteria that Chuck called for in local ownership in nation building no longer existed. Under the Bush administration both the state and nation building efforts of the United States failed in Afghanistan from the initial invasion until the end of his presidency in January 2009. As the external power, the United States and coalition forces used an exclusionary tactic to combat the Taliban and remove the non-core group from power. Those efforts were paired with assimilation in expanding the Afghan state. However, with both of these policies dependent on the United States, there was no sustainable growth and ownership taken by the core group. This can be attributed to the fact that the external powers made all the decisions for the core group. From the beginning, the goal of the mission was combating the Taliban and Al’ Qaeda, with the Afghan people being the afterthought. In fact, this was seen as a future problem to be fixed. With the inability to complete the Al’ Qaeda and Taliban forces, the focus of the Bush state and nation building effort never fully was turned to the people of Afghanistan and their needs.

Reconstruction of Afghanistan Under President Obama:

As President Obama took office in January 2009, he was faced with a difficult task of a recession in the United States and a bleak situation in Afghanistan. However, United States interest in Afghanistan did not waiver with Democrat President Obama taking office in 2009 as is early plan called for a surge of resources in Afghanistan. On December 1st, 2009 President Obama announced his foreign policy for Afghanistan:

“‘We will bring this war to a successful conclusion.’ He strategized in a way that would ‘seek to reverse Taliban gains in large parts of Afghanistan, better protect the Afghan

people, increase the pressure on Afghanistan to build its own military capacity, create a more effective government, and step up attacks on al- Qaeda in Pakistan.”⁸⁸

In order to successfully administer this new policy the total number of combat forces was raised to roughly 78,000 with additional 10,000 to with the sole purpose of training the Afghan National Army.”⁸⁹ Additionally the “United States has provided more than US\$54 billion alone to training and equipping Afghan military and police under the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), yet these organizations are still dependent on U.S. support.⁹⁰ The continued reliance on the United States for security even after years of investment and training raised concerns about the people of Afghanistan’s’ personal investment in their security.

Obama’s policy called for expanding the US-Pakistani relationship in order to create greater regional stability. Pakistan had aided in the initial invasion of Afghanistan against the Taliban and so from the Western point of view this appeared to be a valuable relationship that should be invested into. However, the US-Pakistani relationship came under pressure from some Americans due to the fact that Taliban leaders, including Osama Bin Laden sought refuge in Pakistan. Pakistan was hesitant to respond against Taliban and Al ‘Qaeda leaders living within their borders which frustrated member nations of the Coalition, especially the US. Furthermore, the US could not afford to completely support Pakistan due to their conflict with India, as full military support and assistance of Pakistan would remove the United States from neutrality in that

⁸⁸ Chatterjee, Debalina. “OBAMA’S AFGHANISTAN POLICY: A Review of Literature.” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2010.

⁸⁹ Chatterjee, Debalina. “OBAMA’S AFGHANISTAN POLICY: A Review of Literature.” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2010.

⁹⁰ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

conflict and create tensions between the US and India. There was measurable success during this time as there was “reduced areas under Taliban control substantially and the transition to Afghan security leadership began on schedule in July 2011” and “the killing of Osama bin Laden represented a key accomplishment of the core U.S. mission.”⁹¹

Due to the success of this mission, the policy in Afghanistan began to change from rebuilding and control to withdrawal and sustainability. Within the next few years tens of thousands of troops would be removed from the country and “the U.S. military contingent in Afghanistan would be 9,800 in 2015, deployed in various parts of Afghanistan, consisting mostly of trainers in the NATO-led “Resolute Support Mission (RSM).”⁹² The RSM was a multinational effort to continue to strengthen the capabilities of the Afghan National Army and be able to provide their own security. As international forces were removed from combat and transferred into advisory positions, the Afghan National Army as able to function almost primarily by itself for the first time in ten years since the initial invasion.

Although there was measurable progress in Afghanistan under President Obama, the overall condition of the state and nation building mission could not be labeled as a success. Expansive government built by coalition forces was not readily accepted by all Afghan citizens and was constantly under pressure from corrupt officials. While there were efforts to build schools and medical facilities these often were the first targets by the insurgent forces and became unsafe and forced underground. This inability to protect the foundations of the state did not build trust amongst the Afghan population. Traditionally in Afghanistan opium was the highest grossing

⁹¹ Monten, Jonathan. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

⁹² Clayton, Thomas. “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy.” *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, July 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/R45818>.

export and the world's largest supplier, along with counterterrorism efforts, international actors attempted to combat this and transition opium farmers into cotton farmers through subsidies. In fact, "the estimated revenue from opium production in the past year alone was over \$3 billion, more than double the amount of money that donor governments have contributed to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund since 2002."⁹³ However, due to the harsh agricultural environment and the inability to compete with the opium profit margins, the agricultural sphere of Afghanistan remained dependent on opium. With billions invested into the development of Afghanistan, the United States and partners hoped to see significant progress. However Monten believed that the amount of aid had a negative impact in Afghanistan as "aid may crowd out domestic capacity-building: national leaders may have little incentive to invest scarce resources in improving state capacity in these areas while they are being accomplished by international actors."⁹⁴ Large amounts of untargeted aid have the ability to remove the needed commitment in local ownership. Although aid has the ability to help, there is the potential for the local population to become solely reliant on aid. This reliance on aid will remove the incentive to work and make progress because regardless of their efforts they have international aid to rely on. By the end of his Presidency, Obama had attempted to finish the job in Afghanistan but was limited in his political pull after the bailout of the auto industry and launch of Obamacare. The mission to rebuild Afghanistan had lasted over a decade and costed the United States billions of dollars and thousands of lives. Hence domestic support of the mission began to fail. Politicians and citizens began to question when would enough be enough in Afghanistan.

⁹³ Paris, Roland. "NATO's Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home." Policy Options, December 1, 2006.

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

⁹⁴ Monten, Jonathan. "Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 656, no. 1 (2014): 173–91.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214546989>.

Peace Talks in Afghanistan:

Over the years national sentiment for United States involvement in Afghanistan has begun to waiver and the question of peace and withdrawal have become a reality. In 2012, under the Obama administration, the US intelligence community and special operations forces were able to locate and assassinate Al 'Qaeda founder and leader Osama Bin Laden in his compound in Pakistan. It is worth noting, however, that national sentiment for continued involvement had begun to waiver before his assassination and with the mastermind of 9/11 no longer alive even more Americans began to question the necessity for US forces. According to a Pew Research survey, when asked "Do you think the United States' initial decision to use military force in Afghanistan in 2001 was the right decision or the wrong decision?"⁹⁵ 69% of those surveyed believed it was the right decision with only 20% voting it as the wrong decision in January 2006. However, in September 2018, 45% believed it was the right decision with 39% believing it to be the wrong decision⁹⁶ (See Figure 2 for complete data). In 12 years, the attitude of the United States population went from a majority support of those surveyed to under half the population. During the 2016 Republican nominee Donald Trump campaign platform included withdrawal of all United States forces from Afghanistan as he said in a speech "We're getting out of the nation-building business."⁹⁷ After his election, this sentiment continued into a series of peace talks between the United States and the

⁹⁵ Oliphant, J Baxter. "After 17 Years of War in Afghanistan, More Say U.S. Has Failed than Succeeded in Achieving Its Goals." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, October 5, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/05/after-17-years-of-war-in-afghanistan-more-say-u-s-has-failed-than-succeeded-in-achieving-its-goals/>.

⁹⁶ Oliphant, J Baxter. "After 17 Years of War in Afghanistan, More Say U.S. Has Failed than Succeeded in Achieving Its Goals." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, October 5, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/05/after-17-years-of-war-in-afghanistan-more-say-u-s-has-failed-than-succeeded-in-achieving-its-goals/>.

⁹⁷ Mackenzie, James. "Uncertain Afghanistan Looks to Trump for Decisions on Troops, Aid." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, November 11, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-afghanistan/uncertain-afghanistan-looks-to-trump-for-decisions-on-troops-aid-idUSKBN1361OE>.

Taliban. First in 2018 and most recently in 2020, these peace talks have had varying levels of success according to a variety of sources.

In the 2020 peace in Doha, Qatar there was an agreement drafted that centered on four main parts. These four parts included:

1. Guarantees an enforcement mechanism that will prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies.
2. Guarantees, enforcement mechanisms, and announcement of a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.
3. After the announcement of guarantees for a complete withdrawal of foreign forces and timeline in the presence of international witnesses, and guarantees and the announcement in the presence of international witnesses that Afghan soil will not be used against the security of the United States and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will start intra-Afghan negotiations with Afghan sides on March 10, 2020, which corresponds to Rajab 15, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Hoot 20, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar.
4. A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire will be an item on the agenda of the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. The participants of intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including joint implementation mechanisms, which will be announced along with the completion and agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan.⁹⁸

Within this agreement it is important to note that the United States chooses to maintain its position of not negotiating or interacting with terrorist organizations as it formally will not recognize the Taliban in the peace agreement, they wish to enter with them. This agreement calls for something from everyone and it must be recognized that at this point the United States has no political leverage in these talks as they have continually lost the support of the Afghan citizens throughout the country and only have military leverage due to failures in training and establishing an effective Afghan military. Due to the lack of leverage the United States positioned themselves for complete withdrawal by reducing “U.S. forces in Afghanistan to eight thousand six hundred

⁹⁸ “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.” U.S. Embassy in Qatar. U.S. State Department, March 1, 2020. <https://qa.usembassy.gov/agreement-for-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>.

(8,600)”, “withdrawal all forces from five (5) military bases”⁹⁹, as well as “work with all relevant sides on a plan to expeditiously release combat and political prisoners as a confidence building measure with the coordination and approval of all relevant sides. Up to five thousand (5,000) prisoners of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.”¹⁰⁰ However the United States was not alone in restrictions as a result of this agreement, as even though not officially recognized the Taliban are prohibited from committing or working with those who seek to threaten the security of the United States and its allies. This includes interacting with known members of Al ‘Qaeda but there have already been UN reports of the Taliban continuing interactions with Al ‘Qaeda members which is a breach of the Peace Deal. Additionally, the Taliban are restricted from using Afghanistan as a base of training operations and must comply with all international refugee and migration regulations.

As a foreign nation that provided its own justification for entering the country, the United States has evidently lost host nation support for remaining in Afghanistan at this point. There were future peace talks between the Afghan government and representatives from the Taliban as a result of this agreement which were postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, when reviewing the terms, goal of protecting the security of the United States is under serious question. With limited forces the United States influence throughout the nation is severely limited and will continue to diminish. Furthermore, the language in the agreement where “the Taliban is committed to deal with those seeking asylum or residence in Afghanistan... so that such persons do not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies”¹⁰¹ now leaves the organization that was

⁹⁹ “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.” U.S. Embassy in Qatar. U.S. State Department, March 1, 2020. <https://qa.usembassy.gov/agreement-for-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>.

¹⁰⁰ “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.” U.S. Embassy in Qatar. U.S. State Department, March 1, 2020. <https://qa.usembassy.gov/agreement-for-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>.

¹⁰¹ “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.” U.S. Embassy in Qatar. U.S. State Department, March 1, 2020. <https://qa.usembassy.gov/agreement-for-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>.

founded to combat the United States, as the administrative body to determine its former and current enemy's security. At this moment, "it is unclear whether the Taliban is serious about reaching a deal or whether its leaders are negotiating simply to get U.S. troops to withdraw so Taliban forces can overthrow the Afghan government."¹⁰² The true intentions of the Taliban and Al 'Qaeda are unknown at this point as their position in this agreement appears peaceful but their actions do not reflect the same message.

At the moment, the United States military continues to operate and combat Taliban and Al 'Qaeda forces nearly twenty years after the initial invasion. Sadly, these US forces still sustain casualties in combat even into 2021. When both the Afghan and Taliban parties were finally able to meet in September of 2020 in Qatar, the theme of peace was not displayed back in Afghanistan as "Taliban attacks had killed 98 civilians and injured 230 others in the last two weeks across 24 provinces."¹⁰³ In a time when there is an effort for peace in Qatar, Afghanistan continues to be plagued by violence.

In an opinion piece through the Washington Post, the 7th District House of Representatives Representative from New Jersey, Tom Malinowski, provides two solutions to counter the 2020 peace plan which he believes is a "sham."¹⁰⁴ The first would be to "stop setting deadlines for departure and simply say that we're willing to keep some troops in Afghanistan for as long as the

¹⁰² Jones, Seth G. "A Failed Afghan Peace Deal; Contingency Planning Memorandum 37." *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 1, 2020.

¹⁰³ Al Jazeera. "Afghanistan: Bloodiest Day of Fighting since Peace Talks Began." *Conflict News | Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, September 21, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/21/afghanistan-bloodiest-day-of-fighting-since-peace-talks-began>.

¹⁰⁴ Malinowski, Tom. "Trump's Peace Deal with the Taliban Is a Sham. Here Are Two Honest Alternatives." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, March 7, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-peace-plan-could-seal-afghanistans-fate--without-the-afghans-input/2020/03/06/28809706-5fe6-11ea-b014-4fafa866bb81_story.html.

Afghans want to partner with us, as we have in Germany, South Korea and elsewhere.”¹⁰⁵ With mission sets and timelines outlined by the Afghan government from training to full operations, the United States avoids being plagued by self-imposed deadlines. To this day the US has aided in the security of Germany, Japan, and South Korea where former battle torn countries have been able to maintain a relationship with the United States and have security. Malinowski’s second solution is on the other end of the spectrum where the US would “decide that we truly no longer need to be in Afghanistan, whatever the consequences. If so, then we should just leave.”¹⁰⁶ By severing the resources, deals, and peace talks that are only legitimizing the Taliban, the United States has the ability to rapidly leave the country. Regardless of plan, he believes that there is a fundamental issue with both of these plans:

“The worst option is to tell the American people a fairy tale about peace so that we feel less guilty about leaving, or so Trump can brag that he made a deal. Let’s accept responsibility for all we’ve done in Afghanistan, for good and ill, and keep working with our allies there. Or let’s leave and let the Afghans decide their future themselves.”¹⁰⁷

In the end, the United States cannot ignore the actions and inactions taken over the last forty years in Afghanistan and believe that the 2020 peace plan is the ultimate solution to a prosperous Afghanistan after years of presumably failed nation and state building efforts.

¹⁰⁵ Malinowski, Tom. “Trump's Peace Deal with the Taliban Is a Sham. Here Are Two Honest Alternatives.” The Washington Post. WP Company, March 7, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-peace-plan-could-seal-afghanistans-fate--without-the-afghans-input/2020/03/06/28809706-5fe6-11ea-b014-4fafa866bb81_story.html.

¹⁰⁶ Malinowski, Tom. “Trump's Peace Deal with the Taliban Is a Sham. Here Are Two Honest Alternatives.” The Washington Post. WP Company, March 7, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-peace-plan-could-seal-afghanistans-fate--without-the-afghans-input/2020/03/06/28809706-5fe6-11ea-b014-4fafa866bb81_story.html.

¹⁰⁷ Malinowski, Tom. “Opinion | Trump's Peace Deal with the Taliban Is a Sham. Here Are Two Honest Alternatives.” The Washington Post. WP Company, March 7, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-peace-plan-could-seal-afghanistans-fate--without-the-afghans-input/2020/03/06/28809706-5fe6-11ea-b014-4fafa866bb81_story.html.

Conclusion:

Nearly forty years after the initial invasion of the Soviet Union there is finally the possibility of an Afghanistan free from interference from foreign actors as a result of the 2020 Afghanistan Peace Plan. What will the future hold for an independent Afghanistan? Reverting back to the civil war years directly after the retreat of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan was at a point where they had the capacity to govern themselves free from international or foreign intrusion. Within a few years the entire nation accepted the Taliban rule due to their ability to maintain stability and security which lead to the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. From there the relationship between the Al 'Qaeda and Taliban was expanded and furthered the capacity of the Al'Qaeda, which enabled the attacks on 9/11. Now again there is the possibility for an Afghanistan without foreign actors similar to 1989. Do they now have the tools to provide their own security, stable economy and protect human rights, or will the country soon revert back into the civil war atmosphere that gave rise to Taliban control and the expansion of the Al 'Qaeda? Looking back primarily at the last two decades of US involvement there are a few key points that of handled differently could have enabled the 2020 Afghanistan peace deal to be an instrument of lasting peace.

Since the initial invasion of 2001, Al 'Qaeda forces have lost their strength and capacity and have been unable to launch an attack against the United States on US soil. In all fronts that component of the mission was a success, and the strength of the United States military has protected US soil. Directly after this successful invasion with the removal of the Taliban and retreat of Al 'Qaeda, Ronald Paris argued "The United States and its allies should have made a serious commitment to Afghan security and reconstruction in late 2001 and early 2002, when the Taliban and al-Qaeda were on the run. But they did not, and we are dealing with the consequences

today.”¹⁰⁸ It took until 2003 for President Bush to attempt to label the greater mission in Afghanistan, in the comparison to the rebuild of Germany and Japan. However, remembering the ideals of General Petraeus, Afghanistan operates in a larger complex regional dynamic that is not similar to Western Europe or Japan. Efforts late in the Bush presidency in 2006, then all actions by President Obama were attempts to catch up for early inaction.

With a failing mission and billions invested, the 2020 peace plan was an attempt to remove the United States from theater, but this action too will be another moment of failure of US policy in Afghanistan. The responsibility of security and stability will rely on the Afghan National Army and a promise made by the Taliban and Al 'Qaeda. It cannot be ignored that Al 'Qaeda forces have survived and continue to find the means to carry out their terror after twenty years of the United States occupation and assault, which begs the question their capacity without US interference. Additionally, the 2020 Russian and Al 'Qaeda bounty program demonstrates that other nations that are regarded as enemies of the United States might also use the US withdrawal to expand their sphere of influence. Looking across the border to Iraq, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between Iran and Iraq. In 2003 the United States invaded Iraq and spent billions removing the Saddam regime and in nation building efforts, but the lasting impression of that mission is a questionably democratically elected government that is no longer allies with the United States. Whether it is future influence from Russia or Iran, the potential for an enemy nation of the United States to gain influence in Afghanistan is a potential risk after a full withdrawal. Another example that must be looked at is the current crisis in Yemen where a multi-sided civil war has created a humanitarian crisis due to constant fighting. Saudi Arabia, Iran, the former Yemeni government,

¹⁰⁸ Paris, Roland. “NATO's Choice in Afghanistan: Go Big or Go Home.” Policy Options, December 1, 2006. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/afghanistan-2/natos-choice-in-afghanistan-go-big-or-go-home/>.

ISIS and Al ‘Qaeda all have forces vying for control. It makes one wonder if the United States were to leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan could potentially turn into the next Yemen crisis due to pressure already from Iran through Iraq, Pakistan, and now Russia.

Finally, since 2001, the United States has spent \$133 billion dollars in the global war on terror in Afghanistan, which has cost the lives of 2,419 and counting American service members.¹⁰⁹ Between rebuilding, education, training and access to materials, there are resources in Afghanistan that could be used against the United States if the country were to no longer share the same interests. The 2020 peace plan will not lead to an effective resolution to this multi-decade conflict. Instead it will tarnish the sacrifice of thousands of soldiers. In order to protect the legacy of the mission in Afghanistan, the United States at the moment needs to remain deployed in Afghanistan for both the security of the US and the stability of Afghanistan.

The United States must re-evaluate its perspective and plans in Afghanistan in order to attempt to make up for inaction during the first couple years. Representative Malinowski provided two new plans for the United States. He suggested that in order to protect the investment of security and help the people of Afghanistan there needs to be a greater investment in Afghanistan. To that end, policy makers need to remember the advice of General Petraeus and look at the greater regional dynamic. According to Berger and Reese, “Washington and its allies should focus on a grand strategy for the Middle East and Asia”¹¹⁰ as peace in Afghanistan will not be the solution to everything as people and ideas will always move to different locations. However, if enough

¹⁰⁹ Clayton, Thomas. “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy.” *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, July 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/R45818>.

¹¹⁰ Berger, Mark T, and Justin Y Reese. “From Nation-States in Conflict to Conflict in Nation-States: The United States of America and Nation Building from South Vietnam to Afghanistan.” *International Politics* 47, no. 5 (2010): 451–71.

political environments share a common disapproval for such ideas and perspectives then success might finally be reached.

By looking at the history and current situation of Afghanistan, the greater question that needs to be examined is the United States and their actions of nation and state building. After Cold War the United States stood as the global hegemon and was unmatched in their influence across the globe. While once the world's leading economy, the United States invested heavily in state building projects to rebuild the nations it promised to rescue. Although the mechanisms of states were rebuilt, the great project of building a nation and a national identity was often never achieved. However, as we enter the 21st century the position of the United States and its capacity to be a sole influencer can be questioned due to the globalized community with the rise of nations such as China and India. By no longer being the global hegemon, the United States has now more than ever has lost its ability to both build a state and establish a national identity. At this point "building a national state means creating a sovereign center of political accountability, which is not necessarily the same as building an ally in the war on terror"¹¹¹ and the existing "doctrines of the states and organizations engaged in this effort often contradict the goal of state-building." It can no longer be the responsibility or mission of one nation to facilitate nation building in another country. There needs to be a multinational effort that works alongside with NGOs, multinational corporations (MNCs) and host nation populations in order to ensure that a proper plan is developed and the proper concerns addressed. There is no simple four step plan that can be enacted as "multilateral operations often consist of juxtaposing existing capacities humanitarian aid, war fighting, peacekeeping, economic guidance and assistance, civil society support, democracy

¹¹¹ Rubin, Barnett R. "Peace Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?" *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 175–85.

assistance without a coherent strategy.”¹¹² The international community has failed the people of Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion of 1979, through US invasion in 2001. And now the 2020 Afghanistan Peace Plan is a hasty escape from the crisis the US created.

¹¹² Rubin, Barnett R. “Peace Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?” *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 175–85.

Figure 1: Predictions of existing explanations.¹¹³

Explanations		Predictions
Domestic	H1. Primordialism/Cultural Distance	Populations that do not share the same pre-modern ethnic community with the core-group are more likely to be excluded or accommodated than targeted with assimilationist policies
	H2. Statuses Reversal/ Ethnic Antipathy	Once a previously disadvantaged group takes control of the state its ruling political elites are likely to target the previously advantaged group(s) with exclusionary policies.
	H3. Reputation	Governments faced with few secessionists non-core groups are more likely to pursue exclusionary (or assimilationist) policies than governments with fewer non-core groups in order to signal resolve and discourage future challengers
International	H4. “The Dark Side of Democracy”	The international diffusion of the ideal of popular rule during democratization puts pressure to convert <i>demos</i> into <i>ethnos</i> , this in turn generates <i>organic nationalism</i> , and it ultimately encourages ethnic cleansing of those that do not fit the definition of <i>ethnos</i> .
	H5. National Homeland	Non-core groups with an external homeland are more likely to be targeted for exclusion than assimilation because of the security threat they pose and the high cost of assimilation.

¹¹³ Mylonas, Harris. *Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Figure 2: January 2006- September 2018 Political Survey

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
SEPTEMBER 2018 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
SEPTEMBER 18-24, 2018
N=1,754**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 7-8, 11-13, 28, 33, 44-46, 50-51, 58-59, 64-66, 74-78, 83-84, 93, 96-97
PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

NO QUESTIONS 3-6, 9-10, 14-27, 29-32, 34-43, 47-49, 52-57, 60-63, 67-72, 80-82, 85-92, 94-95

QUESTION 73, 79 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=887]:
Thinking about Afghanistan...

Q.98F2 Do you think the United States' initial decision to use military force in Afghanistan in 2001 was the right decision or the wrong decision?

	Right decision	Wrong decision	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Sep 18-24, 2018	45	39	16
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U) ¹	51	41	8
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	56	37	8
Jun 15-19, 2011	57	35	8
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	52	38	10
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009 ²	56	34	10
Jan 7-11, 2009	64	25	11
Feb, 2008	65	24	11
Dec, 2006	61	29	10
Jan, 2006	69	20	11

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=887]:
Q.99F2 Overall, do you think the United States has mostly succeeded or mostly failed in achieving its goals in Afghanistan?

	(U)	(U)	(U)
	Sep 18-24 2018	May 12-18 2015	Jan 15-19 2014
Mostly succeeded	35	36	38
Mostly failed	49	56	52
Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	16	7	10

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