



My Drift

Title: The Afghanistan War

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Why is the US military still in Afghanistan?

The US War in Afghanistan (or code-named Operation Enduring Freedom (2001–2014) and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (2015–present)) is the longest war (17 years from October 7, 2001 to Present) in US history and its costliest (\$1.1 trillion) since World War II.



As of August 5, 2018, there have been over 3,500 US led coalition forces deaths in Afghanistan. Here is the breakdown:

US led Coalition Forces	
Country	Deaths
United States	2,372
United Kingdom	460
Canada	158
France	88
Germany	57
Italy	53
Poland	44
Denmark	43
Australia	41
Spain	35
(Other)	50

1,856 of these US deaths were the result of hostile action. 20,320 American servicemembers have also been wounded in action during the war. In addition, there were 1,720 US civilian contractor fatalities.

Also, during this war there has been over 31,000 civilian deaths and about the same number wounded. In all, over 112,000 Afghans, including civilians, soldiers and militants, are estimated to have been killed in the conflict.

Why did the US go to war in Afghanistan?



Well, I hope you have not forgotten the 9/11 terrorist attacks against our country!!

After the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, President George W. Bush vowed vengeance against the perpetrators who were quickly identified as being linked to al Qaeda – the extreme Salafist terror group founded by Osama bin Laden and based in Afghanistan.

After the atrocity, Bush, speaking to a joint session of Congress, gave a stark warning to the Taliban, a Sunni jihadist movement which aimed to create an Islamic emirate in Afghanistan. “The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate,” he said.



Osama bin Laden



US Bombs Afghan Targets



There was a lot of international pressure on the Afghan leaders to hand over Osama Bin Laden. When the Taliban didn't do this, the United States decided they would use their armed forces. On 7 October 2001, the US began bombing Afghanistan. They targeted bin Laden's al-Qaeda fighters and the Taliban.

In November 2001, the Northern Alliance took control of the Afghan capital Kabul. They were being helped by the US and other countries that agreed to help us, including the UK. The Taliban were quickly driven out of the capital city of Kabul. The Taliban, once an effective and enduring insurgency that ruled in Afghanistan, was toppled after the US invasion in 2001.

I agreed 100% with President Bush's decision to bomb and invade Afghanistan. I'm thankful that we had a president in office with the guts to do it.

However, I think the US screwed up by not punishing Saudi Arabia since 15 of the 19 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia. The other four were from the United Arab Emirates (2), Egypt, and Lebanon. The terrorists were organized into four teams, each led by a pilot-trained hijacker with three or four "muscle hijackers," who were trained to subdue or kill the pilots, passengers, and crew.

But the biggest US screw up that continues to this day was not getting the heck out of Afghanistan. We should have declared victory and gotten our military out of the country within 2 years max. I don't believe any US war should last more than 2 years!

As far as I can tell, this region where Afghanistan is now located has been at war since humans first inhabited it about 80,000 years ago during the Stone Age. The written recorded history of the land can be traced back to around 500 BC when the area was under the Achaemenid Empire. Alexander the Great and his Macedonian army arrived at what is now Afghanistan in 330 BC after conquering Persia during the Battle of Gaugamela. Since then, many empires have established capitals inside Afghanistan, including the Greco-Bactrians, Mauryas, Kushans, Hindu Shahi, Saffarids, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Timurids, Mughals, Hotakis and Durrani.

Afghanistan has been a strategically important location throughout history. The land served as "a gateway to India, on the ancient Silk Road, which carried trade from the Mediterranean to China". Sitting on many trade and migration routes, Afghanistan has been a prime target for many invading armies.

The history of Afghanistan as it is known today began in 1747 with its establishment by Ahmad Shah Durrani. It has been called various forms of Afghanistan since then.

Here is a partial list of wars and conflicts since 1823:

War/Conflict	Afghanistan and Allies	Opponents	Results
Emirate of Afghanistan (1823–1926)			
First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842)	Afghanistan	British Empire	Victory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British India withdrawal after abandoning its war objective
Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880)	Afghanistan	British Empire	Defeat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British achieved the desired goals through the Treaty of Gandamak Afghanistan's tribal frontier areas annexed to India
1888-1893 Uprisings of Hazaras	Afghan forces loyal to Abdur Rahman Khan	Afghan forces loyal to Sher Ali Khan including the Hazara people	Victory of Abdur Rahman Khan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Killing and displacement of 60% of the Hazara people's population including 35,000 families that fled to northern Afghanistan, Mashhad (Iran) and Quetta (Pakistan)

Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919)	Afghanistan	British Empire	Victory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaty of Rawalpindi • Afghan independence with full sovereignty in foreign affairs
Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (1978–1992)			
Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979–1989)	D.R. Afghanistan and the Soviet Union	Mujahideen	Stalemate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan • Afghan Civil War continues
Civil war in Afghanistan (1989–1992)	D.R. Afghanistan	Mujahideen	Regime change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mujahideen victory • Establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan
Islamic State of Afghanistan (1992–2001)			
Civil war in Afghanistan (1992–1996)	Islamic State of Afghanistan	Taliban Al Qaeda	Regime change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taliban enter Kabul, and establish the largely unrecognized Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan
Civil war in Afghanistan (1996–2001)	(United Front) Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan	Taliban Al Qaeda Pakistan	Stalemate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalemate with varying fronts between the Taliban and Massoud's forces (United Front)
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2001–Present)			
War in Afghanistan (2001–Present)	United States and its Allies Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Taliban Al Qaeda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American-led coalition invasion and occupation of Afghanistan • Destruction of al-Qaeda militant training camps • Fall of the Taliban government • Establishment of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan under the Karzai administration • Start of Taliban insurgency • Death of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan • Commencement of war's 2015–present phase

Okay, let me summarize this chart for you. It doesn't matter what kind of government is running Afghanistan, they are always at war with somebody. The British went to war at least four times in Afghanistan and they are still there with the US. The Soviet Union was fighting in Afghanistan for over nine years before they give up trying to win and

went home. The United States military has been in Afghanistan for 17 years and we are still there. Why? I'm trying to figure that out right now.

When we do finally leave some day, Afghanistan will just go back to fighting their Civil Wars while they wait for the next country to invade their war-torn country.

What is the Present Situation in Afghanistan?

Bad and getting worse!!

Today, the Taliban is joined by more than 3,000 Islamic State fighters along with their longstanding allies al Qaeda and the Haqqani network.



The Taliban



Al Qaeda



ISIS



Haqqani Network

Violence in Afghanistan has risen dramatically since the phased withdrawal of allied troops in 2014. The Taliban insurgency has increasingly gained ground, carrying out successful terror attacks across the country and now has a presence in 70 percent of Afghanistan.

Last month just under 200 people were killed in four separate attacks carried out by terrorist groups including the Taliban, ISIS-Khorasan and the Haqqani network.

For 17 years, three successive presidents have told the American public that above all else, Afghanistan must never again provide “safe haven” to terrorist groups seeking to harm the United States and its interests. But Defense Department and intelligence officials now say exactly that may be on the verge of happening.

With the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in its twilight, American military officials are tracking foreign fighters veering to provinces in Afghanistan’s north and east. Meanwhile, Al Qaeda and the Taliban remain a persistent and deadly threat across the country.

There are 21 known terrorist groups fighting for turf and power in Afghanistan. The “Land of Allah” is vast and several terrorist groups have taken safe-haven in Tora Bora and Wazir Tanki districts in Nangarhar Province that are close to Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan.



Afghan Fighters

What is President Trump’s Plan for Afghanistan?

On August 21, 2017, President Donald Trump addressed American soldiers and Army generals at the Fort Myers military base in Arlington, Virginia, announcing that he was taking a new approach to the war in Afghanistan.

Trump said American service members would be withdrawn on a "condition-based" approach and not according to a timetable. “One way or another these problems will be solved,” he said. “In the end, we will win.”

To that end, the number of US troops serving in Afghanistan has increased by 3,000, bringing the total number to 14,000. The US military mission in Afghanistan is to train, advise and assist the Afghan military who are doing the actual fighting against the Taliban, ISIS and other militant groups, but US military personnel can find themselves in combat situations while carrying out the advisory mission.



President Donald Trump discusses his Strategy for Winning the War in Afghanistan



**Army Lt. Gen. Austin "Scott" Miller
New Commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission and U.S. Forces**

Trump, in a shift from his predecessor, gave more power to military leaders in carrying out operations, bestowing additional authority on the Pentagon. On April 13, 2017, the U.S. military deployed a GBU-43, nicknamed "the mother of all bombs," on an ISIS tunnel in Afghanistan. It sent a strong signal about how the new president was positioning himself on the fight against terror.

Why haven't these militant groups been defeated after 17 years?

No matter what President Trump and General Miller say, me and most experts agree that winning the war in Afghanistan is impossible.

The Taliban and most of these other established militant groups in the country are not normal military groups – it's a lifelong commitment to a struggle. You can't wait for their troops' rotations to end. You can't wait for their term of enlistment to expire. There is only death or success for them.

The myriad tribal and ethnic groups that live in Afghanistan have become disassociated with the central government in Kabul. This is probably caused by the Afghanistan government who mostly ignores its citizens living in remote tribal lands far away from the capital. Fighting an insurgency on a very local level, especially in areas such as

eastern Afghanistan where the people don't necessarily have any connection to the central government, makes it incredibly hard to achieve victory or any of your military goals.

The US hasn't yet mastered how to win wars against insurgents, which are smaller fights against groups within countries. War and internal fighting are all these people know and it will probably never stop in Afghanistan.

So, the war goes on and on...



How to End the War in Afghanistan – My Recommendation

I think President Trump and General Miller are smart enough to know this war is not winnable. We are still in Afghanistan for the following reasons:

- *Keeping these terrorist groups busy so that they are not planning, training and committing major terrorist attacks in the United States. Better to do the fighting over there in Afghanistan than on our own soil.*
- *Need to provide enough support to the Afghan Government to keep the Taliban from taking over the country again.*
- *Try to maintain some human rights in Afghanistan. The Taliban are well known for numerous human rights abuses, especially against women.*
- *Able to keep a closer eye on Pakistan who is supposed to be a major non-NATO ally in the War on Terrorism, and a leading recipient of U.S. aid. Financial aid to Pakistan since the 11 September 2001 attacks is \$18 billion in military and economic aid.*

Do you think Pakistan is a US friend? I doubt it.

- *Afghanistan is a good testing site and training grounds for our military forces.*

These are all good reasons, but I think they can be accomplished without having our troops on the ground. The US cannot stay in Afghanistan forever!! We should be able to drop enough bombs on the terrorists to keep them under control.

President Trump is good at putting a positive spin on his accomplishments. He should secretly order all US and NATO troops out of Afghanistan. Once this is done, go on national TV and declare victory in Afghanistan, brag about achieving our goals and getting our military safely out of that war-torn country. He should go on to say our military is still providing support to the Afghan government and military - just not ground troops.



Trump can do this! We need to make America great again!

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