

# How is the U.S. government going to end the war in Afghanistan?

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*Columnist*

"War was ugly and evil but it was still the way things got done on most of the planet. Here in the raw Third World, people hadn't learned to back down, at least not until after a lot of blood flowed. Victory was for those willing to fight and die. Intellectuals could theorize until they sucked their thumbs right off their hands, but in the real world, power still flowed from the barrel of a gun." Although this quote from the novel "Blackhawk Down" is referring to thoughts on United States' involvement in Somalia, it describes perfectly why war will continue to exist in our world.

Civilization has not yet learned how to live without war, and as long as some are willing to kill to pursue their selfish demands, societies need to be able to defend themselves.

The war in Afghanistan is meant to prevent and limit further terrorist attacks. There is overwhelming evidence that al Qaeda and other terrorists groups were involved in the planning and execution of the attacks. The plans for the World Trade Center attacks began with the 1993 truck bombing by Ramsi Youseff killed six people in that attack and considered it a failure. The planning began shortly thereafter to use multiple hijacked airliners to complete the attack. Youseff was a bomb-making instructor for al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. While al Qaeda's ability to acquire a nuclear warhead is unlikely, they were trying vigorously to obtain nuclear fuel or waste and construct a dirty bomb. In Manhattan, it would kill tens of thousands and contaminate a 200 square mile area with nuclear waste that would require 24 years to clean up. Ignoring the Taliban and al Qaeda would be asking for even more disaster than we experienced on Sept. 11.

Though the United States government feels that this is enough justification to turn to war, people often forget to stop and think about what the war will involve. If our goal in the war on terrorism is to dismantle the Taliban and al Qaeda,

it means we must destroy any terrorist cell similar to it. This will certainly mean troops will have to get involved in other countries where terrorism is a threat.

Additionally, by destroying the Taliban, Afghanistan is left with no rulers or government. In December, the United States appointed Hamid Karzai as the head of Afghanistan's interim government. While Washington hails him as a symbol for a new Afghanistan, his country is still defined by violence and tribal enmities. His power to rule is strictly confined to his reliance on U.S. military support. Recently, Abdul Rahman, Karzai's head of air transport in the new government, boarded a flight to India and found his aircraft surrounded by a mob. Rahman offered to resign, but someone disguised as a pilgrim stabbed him and threw him down the steps. Karzai announced the next day that Rahman had been assassinated in an apparent plot by some of his own government ministers. If the interim government members are plotting assassinations against one another, how will they restore order in Afghanistan?

Reconstruction of Afghanistan requires tremendous economic aid from the global community. Mark Brown, head of the U.N. Development Program, has said the likely cost of Afghanistan reconstruction is \$7-10 billion over five years. He estimated that it will take \$500 million alone just to remove land mines planted during 20 years of warfare.

It's easy to understand the complexity of rebuilding Afghanistan simply by looking at the country's infrastructure. Developing Afghanistan is difficult because they lack adequate transportation. Water and electrical utilities are extremely limited. Large segments of the population have little or no education, and during the Taliban rule, there was no education for women. A successful reconstruction requires massive transportation and education reforms. Health care and hospitals are another necessity for a smoothly operating country. Afghanistan's long history of tribal conflict and lawlessness continues to complicate pacification efforts. In Afghanistan, you don't get in a



Photo courtesy of KRT Campus

Northern Alliance fighters prepare for upcoming battle during Operation Enduring Freedom.

car and drive to Charlotte or Atlanta and watch a football game.

When considering all that will have to take place after the fighting in Afghanistan ends, it may be difficult to see how billions of dollars and the loss of innocent lives is worth the end result. If you believe or accept the idea that it is not O.K.

for bad people to kill innocents in order to achieve a selfish goal, then defending the innocents is a necessity. Sometimes, the only way to stop a madman who is killing thousands is to kill his ability to inflict murder. Unfortunately Adolf Hitler, Joesef Stalin, Mohamed Fararah Aidid, Slobadon Milosevic, and

Osama bin Laden are examples of this. Until we find a way to stop these murderers without force, war in some form will remain necessary. The best chance to avoid it is to be the strongest and use that strength to discourage future madmen from killing in the first place.

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