

Six Things You Need to Know About Afghanistan and the Taliban

When it comes to Afghanistan, the mainstream media hides the most inconvenient facts for the West. Once you take those into account, you get a completely different story.

By [Marc Vandepitte](#)

Global Research, August 18, 2021

Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [AFGHANISTAN](#)

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1. Monstrous covenant with jihadis

The story starts in 1979. Afghanistan had a left-wing government, which of course was not to the liking of the US. Zbigniew [Brzezinski](#), President Carter’s adviser, devised the plan to arm and train jihadis – then still called mujahideen – in Afghanistan. The aim was to provoke a Soviet invasion, in order to saddle Moscow with a Vietnam-like scenario.

Carter followed his advice and provided the mujahideen the necessary help. The plan worked. The government in Kabul ran into difficulties and asked the Kremlin for help. The Afghan quagmire forced the Soviet Union to remain in the Central Asian country for ten years.

During that period, the CIA pumped [\\$2 billion](#) in aid, weapons, and logistical support to the mujahideen. They were even supplied with the infamous [Stinger missiles](#) with which they could shoot down Soviet planes and helicopters. Sylvester Stallone’s *Rambo III* is a Hollywood depiction of this collaboration. The movie was [dedicated](#) to “the brave Mujahideen fighters”.

As long as the Soviet troops remained in the country, the government in Kabul could hold out. However, in 1989 [Gorbachev](#) decided to end their military aid. Once the Soviet troops left the country, civil war broke out. The best organized and most brutal group, the Taliban, eventually prevailed and took power in 1996.

2. Creation of Al Qaeda

The most prominent figure to emerge during that period is Osama bin Laden. In 1988, he founded Al Qaeda, a fundamentalist and ruthless terrorist group. Through the intelligence

service of Pakistan [in liaison with the CIA], he could count on a lot of support from the US. In exchange for that aid, Al Qaeda provided [a number of services](#) to the US and its Western allies.

During the “civil war” in Yugoslavia (1992-1995), the Pentagon flew thousands of Al Qaeda fighters into Bosnia to support the Muslims there. During the war against Yugoslavia in 1999, Al Qaeda fought side by side with the KLA terrorists (the Kosovo Liberation Army was fighting for the separation of Kosovo from Yugoslavia and for a Greater Albania), covered in the air by NATO. Al Qaeda fighters have also popped up in Chechnya, Xinjiang (where the Uighurs live), Macedonia, and in many other countries in the region and far beyond.[i]

The cooperation between the Bush administration and Osama bin Laden is brought to light in Michael Moore’s documentary [Fahrenheit 9/11](#).

3. It’s the oil stupid!

There are promising [oil and gas reserves](#) around the Caspian Sea. But to transport these resources to the West there are only three possibilities: through Russia, through Iran, or through Afghanistan.

The US obviously won’t give it to the Russians and since the fall of the Shah in 1979, Washington has lost its influence in Iran. So, there’s only one option left: Afghanistan. At the end of 1994, in full civil war, the US thought that [the Taliban](#) had the best assets to ‘stabilize’ the country. That was a necessity for the construction of the pipeline. According to [the CIA](#), the Taliban were seen as “a possible tool in yet another replay of the Great Game – the race for energy riches in Central Asia.”

The US became the [main sponsor](#) of this new rogue regime. It did not matter that the Taliban at that time were the most virulent violators of human rights in the world. According to an [American diplomat](#), the Taliban would “probably develop like the Saudis did. There will be Aramco [consortium of oil companies controlling Saudi oil], pipelines, an emir, no parliament, and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.”

4. Taliban fail to deliver

Initially, the Taliban achieved one military success after another, but ultimately failed to conquer the entire country. The hoped-for stabilization – necessary for the pipeline – did not materialize. The US then changed strategy and sought a reconciliation of all warring parties.

Washington demanded that the Taliban enter into talks with the Northern Alliance to form a coalition government. The talks that lasted until the end of July 2001 failed. The US warned it wouldn’t stop there: “Either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs” was the message from [US representatives](#) to the Taliban at the end of July.

The Taliban did not give in. The bombing started in October. A little later, it leaked that the plans for this had already been on President Bush’s desk two days before September 11. In the [Washington Post](#) of December 19, 2000, Professor Starr wrote that the US “has quietly begun to align itself with those in the Russian government calling for military action against Afghanistan and has toyed with the idea of a new raid to wipe out Osama bin Laden.”

In late June 2001, more than two months before the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, Indiareacts.com magazine reported that “India and Iran will ‘facilitate’ US and Russian plans for ‘limited military action’ against the Taliban if the contemplated tough new economic sanctions don’t bend Afghanistan’s fundamentalist regime.”

5. President Pipeline

The attacks on September 11 in any case were the perfect excuse for Washington to invade Afghanistan and oust the Taliban from power. Thus, the plans for the pipeline could be realized for the time being.

[Gore Vidal](#), a leading US columnist, put it very bluntly:

“As it proved, the conquest of Afghanistan had nothing to do with Osama. He was simply a pretext for replacing the Taliban with a relatively stable government that would allow Union Oil of California to lay its pipeline for the profit of, among others, the Cheney-Bush junta.”

The facts on the ground showed us this was true. On December 22, 2001, Hamed Karzai became Afghan Prime Minister. He was a CIA confidant and had previously worked as a [counselor at Unocal](#). Unocal was a very large American petroleum company that long has had plans for a pipeline through Afghanistan.

Nine days later, another of this company’s advisers, Zalmay Khalilzad, was appointed by Bush as [special envoy](#) to Afghanistan. [Khalilzad](#) had in the past participated in talks with Taliban officials about the possibility of building gas and oil pipelines. He had urged the Clinton administration to take a softer line on the Taliban.

Both men were fulfilling their duties properly. On 30 May 2002, [the BBC](#) reported that Karzai had reached an agreement with his Pakistani and Turkmen counterpart for a pipeline from Turkmenistan to a port in Pakistan, across Afghanistan.

A few weeks earlier, [Business Week](#) commented on the evolution in the region as follows:

“American soldiers, oilmen, and diplomats are rapidly getting to know this remote corner of the world, the old underbelly of the Soviet Union and a region that’s been almost untouched by Western armies since the time of Alexander the Great. The game the Americans are playing has some of the highest stakes going. What they are attempting is nothing less than the biggest carve-out of a new U.S. sphere of influence since the U.S. became engaged in the Mideast 50 years ago.”

It didn’t work out as planned. The Taliban were defeated, but not knocked out. They also had a much higher morale than the government army, which could [only hold out](#) thanks to NATO air cover and other logistical support. When Biden decided to withdraw that support a few weeks ago, it collapsed like a house of cards.

6. Cost and ‘results’ of the war

The longest war in US history has cost more than \$2,000 billion, according to the [New York Times](#). That is 100 billion dollars annually, almost 20 times as much as the entire [government budget](#) of the Afghan government.

Despite the huge amounts of aid, the results are staggering. Almost half of the population today lives [in poverty](#). Infant mortality is among the highest in the world and life expectancy among the lowest.

In the period before the war, opium cultivation was almost completely eradicated. Today, Afghanistan supplies 80 percent of the world's heroin. The war resulted in [5.5 million refugees](#). That number is now likely to rise sharply.

The cost of [human life](#) is high. 47,000 civilians, 66,000 Afghan soldiers and policemen, and 51,000 Taliban and other rebels have been killed in the past 20 years. On the Western side, nearly 4,000 US soldiers and 1,100 soldiers from other NATO countries died. [official figures, do not include the deaths of civilians].

After twenty years of occupation, we are back to square one. A Belgian [TV journalist](#) describes it as "a catastrophe, a failure of the Western model to try to change a country like Afghanistan."

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Notes

[i] Chossudovsky M., *War and Globalisation. The Truth Behind September 11*, Ontario 2002; Howard S., 'The Afghan Connection: Islamic Extremism in Central Asia' in *National Security Studies Quarterly* Volume VI, nr. 3 (Summer 2000); Rashid A., *L'ombre des Taliban*, Paris 2001.

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