



***QUALITY RESEARCH FOR COMPETENT DEBATE***

**FROM THE FORERUNNER OF PUBLIC FORUM**

Resolved: President Obama's plan for increasing troops in  
Afghanistan is in the United States' best interest.

**January 2010**

## TOPIC BRIEF

I think the NFL got this one right.

*Resolved: President Obama's plan for increasing troops in Afghanistan is in the United States' best interest.*

Enjoy it while it lasts, because that's only one month – and a short one, as you aren't likely to be debating in early January.

There is nowhere better to begin than with a historical overview of the geopolitical situation of the United States since September 11<sup>th</sup> of 2001. Shortly after that tragic date in time, the United States of America was handed a blank check to pursue those responsible to the end of the earth. The United Nations and NATO gave the US rhetorical and actual support, respectively, to conduct whatever operations they so choose in the pursuit of this mission. And President Bush, acting on solid intelligence that the Afghan-based and Taliban-supported terrorist group al-Qaeda was responsible for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, ordered the nation invaded, the Taliban overthrown, and al-Qaeda exterminated.

U.S. troops invaded the country in October of 2001, to general approval at home and abroad. Toppling the government was relatively easy – the CIA was the first US organization to begin military operations, and it was quickly aided by U.S. Army Special Forces, but the bulk of the fighting originally was done by soldiers from the Northern Alliance, a rebel group located in the north of the country. Even when the capital of Kabul was taken, it was Northern Alliance fighters who occupied the city. The US had been conducting bombing and other long-range operations for some time, but in actuality this was an Afghan operation with US support by one political faction against another.

US forces started entering the war in earnest in late November and early December, at about the time that the Northern Alliance was assaulting the Taliban's ancestral homeland of Kandahar. When the Marines got involved, the battle was essentially over. Five days later, the Taliban leaders and a significant military contingent fled the region for the mountains of Tora Bora and have been on the run ever since.

Consolidation operations began the following February, under the banner of Operation Anaconda. US, UN, Afghan and Allied forces swept through the region to eradicate any Taliban resistance, while bombings continued in Tora Bora as they had for some time. This operation ended roughly a month later. The US and Coalition casualties were almost a byline in the news articles of the time, casually

mentioning the deaths of 8 US and 3 Coalition deaths. Another 70 were wounded. The number of enemy soldiers killed was always an estimate, and ranged from 450 to 650 to 1,200.

After Operation Anaconda the Taliban gathered strength in the mountainous region of adjacent Pakistan, rebuilding their strength until early 2003. Then, they began an insurgency under the lead of Mullah Muhammad Omar, a former party leader.

The insurgency consisted of a brief spate of guerilla attacks along the northern border and in some southern cities with strong Taliban support. It continued until the summer of 2003, and then in reduced frequency and intensity until the present day. The southern cities have basically been pacified by a NATO operation beginning in 2006 that continued the operations of Operation Enduring Freedom in that region. The Pakistani border has continued to be a problem, and the site of many terrorist attacks.

Even though Coalition control is a virtual certainty in all major cities, the fact of the matter is that the new government's control over the entire country is tenuous at best in the outlying regions. Many places still retain loyalty to the Taliban fighters hiding in their midst, and the Taliban effectively controls some tribal areas through local warlords. Their fighters are tough to exterminate thanks to their

Pakistani hideouts. Major rebellions have been narrowly averted, and the growth of poppy seeds for opium production is at an all-time high, despite its harsh illegality. The situation has degraded, and Hamid Karzai has been know sarcastically as the Mayor of Kabul since 2003 for his inability to control rural regions for any length of time.

Very recently the situation has seen some improvement, at least measured by the US's commitment to the country. President Bush announced a troop increase in Afghanistan at the same point in time that he decided to draw down the force in Iraq. It was looking like the US was finally on the right course, with the US force nearly doubling eventually to around 34,000. At the same time, insurgent attacks continued at a deadly rate. 2008 saw the loss of over 500 Coalition forces, almost 300 of which were US troops.

Since Barack Obama's inauguration, he has increased the number of troops to something like 50,000 US soldiers and maybe 25,000 that from other Coalition nations. While this is seen as a step in the right direction, General McChrystal has reported that a successful counterinsurgency force would consist of some 500,000 troops and 5 years of operations. We are at 3/20 of the necessary force if that estimate is correct.

On December 1, Barack Obama announced the Afghanistan Policy that will be the focus of the resolution to deal with the current scenario. His plan has three main prongs.

First, we must deny al-Qaeda a safe haven. This is obviously our first and foremost goal, as it can be directly associated with the search for those responsible for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, specifically Osama bin Laden and his chief lieutenants. The fact of the matter is that we are at war with this organization, and we owe their destruction to ourselves. This means denying them a presence everywhere in the world, but in the context of this speech the President was only specifically referring to their presence in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Denying them a safe haven means absolutely refusing to let them live in peace no matter which side of the border they happen to be on.

Second, we must break the momentum that the Taliban and al-Qaeda currently have in the insurgency. Since invasion in 2001, the situation has gotten a great deal worse. As President Obama noted, while the current government is not in danger of collapse there is a real challenge to their authority in some Taliban strongholds. General McChrystal has said that the international force is absolutely losing the fight in Afghanistan, even saying that they are losing the war as a whole. This came during the summer, when attacks are traditionally high, and the insurgents were also coordinating an exceptional number of attacks as a precursor

to elections later that month. Either way, the ability of US and Coalition forces to stop these attacks are minimal.

The final step in this process is to build Afghan forces to take over operations from the United States. The Obama Administration does not want to stay in Afghanistan and envisions the beginning of troop withdrawal to start a mere 18 months after the surge begins. It is important to note that there has been concern over this – many people inside both the US and Afghan governments favor a permanent US presence in the region, for reasons that will be discussed later.

This is to be achieved in three main ways, according to the president. The first and most obvious is to pursue effective military strategies in accordance with the troop increase of 30,000 soldiers in early 2010 – the earliest available opportunity, according to Obama. This will allow us to break the momentum of the insurgency militarily, in addition to achieving a number of other objectives. We will be better able to train Afghan forces, contributing to a faster transfer of power. The earlier that Afghan forces do not need Coalition support to conduct effective military raids, Obama will get our troops out of the region. This is not to say that we will do this alone. Obama intends on doing all of this with additional troop contributions from our allies, which may not match ours but would provide additional security for Coalition-controlled regions.

The work that we do with allies will also have to improve as far as a civilian strategy goes. This was the second main way that Obama specified for improving the Afghan government. He alluded to the ineffectiveness and corruption that was rampant in the Afghan government and states that this is going to end. America will no longer provide a blank check for the Afghan government to take its time improving its country. America will, however, support those who combat corruption as that support is needed.

Also in the civilian sphere is agriculture, which Obama considers one of the most important things we will do working with our allies. Obama mentioned that this will immediately and significantly improve the lives of the Afghani people in a positive manner. And while he did not say it outright, he indubitably thinks that this agricultural effort will staunch the flow of opium distribution stemming from Afghanistan. By incentivizing farmers to grow crops they can use market forces to combat the drug trade.

The third main way that we can move forward is to work with/against Pakistan. Calling for a strategy that works on both sides of the border, Obama fully intends to aid the Pakistanis in prosecuting al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan. As both groups have bases in that country, Pakistan is either a necessary ally or problematic. Part of the plan that Obama did not specify in the speech to West Point is that the US would take action on Pakistan's behalf if they continue to fail

to do so. This means violating Pakistani air space with virtual certainty, and probably also crossing their border on the ground if problems persist. But Obama called these terrorist groups a “common enemy” of Pakistan and the United States, and the administration continues to hope for Pakistan’s cooperation in this matter.

The president did address some concerns at the end of his speech. He makes the case that Afghanistan is not another Vietnam, repeats the argument that we really do need more troops, and defends the concept of a timeline in this context. But these criticisms are the basic ones that arise from either the left or right, and you would do well to familiarize yourselves with them.

This speech, and this plan in general, is mostly important because it is going to be the operant definition for an important term in the resolution: President Obama's plan for increasing troops in Afghanistan. This very speech was the one in which he revealed his plan for increasing troops in Afghanistan, and it was also detailed on what he plans to do with those troops. This brings us to our first problem with the resolution.

There is a substantive difference between increasing the troop numbers in Afghanistan and using them effectively. To be sure, President Obama intends to do both – but not all of that fits strictly under the banner of the resolution. The resolution asks you to analyze his plan for deploying troops to that country – not for how those troops will be used. And there is no doubt that an additional 30,000

troops would be useless until they are actually used. So when the resolution asks you if Obama's plan to deploy additional troops makes the US better off, it is tempting to say that it doesn't. After all, deploying troops does nothing. Using troops does everything.

The biggest problem with this critique is that it violates legislative intent, and may be too technical. Debate is obviously better served when we debate the impact of this surge as if the troops are inherently being used, not when the con uses definitions to win before real debate even begins. Furthermore, the pro could easily argue that these troops are being deployed for the very purpose of executing Obama's plan, and therefore all military actions that they take will be under the umbrella of the resolution. They will execute the military strategy, provide a safe environment for civilian life to flourish, and be our tools in any Pakistani action undertaken. They also will include any foreign troops as well – remember that the resolution makes no distinction between a plan to send US or foreign troops, and Obama is planning on sending both as it stands right now. You can make any of that plan applicable, all that is required is a moment's thought. So for all intents and purposes Obama's plan to deploy these troops is exactly what we just went over – his speech to West Point plus a couple of other key points that we have already noted. This will be the operant definition in a good round.

The predicate of the sentence is a simple word, the verb “to be” in the present tense: is. This is, then, a truth-statement resolution. It gives you a statement, and the pro must prove the resolution to be a true statement. The con must prove that it is somehow false. The only real issue that might arise is if someone tries to argue that we “should” do as Obama intends, rather than if his actions will benefit us – which might not be important in most rounds, but if a team argues that we should follow Obama’s plan because it is good for Afghanistan, their opponents could likely critique it on the grounds of being extra-resolutional.

The only remaining definitional background is to go over exactly what the United States’ best interests actually are. And on this, we are likely to find a substantial amount of disagreement, in the United States as a whole and your judging pool specifically. As expected, there is disagreement along political lines.

Liberal Democrats have been among the most vocal critics of the President’s policy. They basically oppose war in any way, and spent the day after Obama’s speech holding signs in protest of the action, demanding that our troops be sent home yesterday. This segment of the population is more vocal than numerically substantive, so it will be ignored as much as possible. Obama may be a Democrat but he understands that to withdraw our forces now would be to leave a bad situation to almost certain destabilization. And on this, Obama and Republicans agree.

Republicans either agree with the surge or want to expand on it. Opinion in favor of the war in Afghanistan has always been high, but especially so among Republicans eager to put a boot in the ass of the people responsible for 9/11. As a whole, Republicans would support following Osama to hell and back again.

If a Republican criticizes this action, it is probably because they support the creation of permanent military bases in the region – a popular neocon notion. Afghanistan is in a prime location for an American military presence abroad. It has a weak government indebted to us. It is incredibly close to necessary fossil fuels. It is basically adjacent to Iran, among the most belligerent of nations. And it is on the same continent as Russia and China, two historically unfriendly nations. A permanent US military presence in the region makes sense for economic and political reasons long into the future. As John McCain famously said during the election, we could be in the region for 50 years or more.

Individuals in both governments have mentioned this as a possibility, and it appears to be underway already in the form of construction efforts at sites along the Pakistani border.

So the US's national interests are a subject of some debate, and that will be the basis of this resolution as a whole. If this resolution has a real problem, it's that it is too biased toward the pro. The fact of the matter is that 30,000 troops is a

feasible number of soldiers that can be delivered to a region where they are badly needed. If you accept that we should still be in Afghanistan, it is hard to fight the need for these soldiers.

If you don't, then you at least have a platform. Another advocacy that makes a certain amount of sense is for the con to say that increasing our force from 3/20 of the needed force to 5/20 (or so we would say according to General McChrystal's estimates) is a paltry amount that won't make any difference to the United States' interests. But the only truly quality option is to talk about a Pakistani backlash if we violate their airspace.

Make no mistake, the United States of America has lost all faith in the ability of Pakistan to mount an effective counterinsurgency program. We do not believe that they have the strength or willpower to protect their own people due to corruption and inefficiency, and we lack any sort of trust for their government as a whole. But because Pakistan is so vitally important to US interests we have played incredibly nicely with them so far. Those days are over. If Pakistan cannot police their own territory, we will do it for them. We will pursue Osama bin Laden to the ends of the earth – Pakistan is no big deal. That means unmanned drones in Pakistani airspace dropping bombs into Pakistani mountain ranges. It means U.S. soldiers crossing the border or being airlifted over it. It means a probable international incident.

With the exception of France, no country can tolerate the violation of its sovereignty lightly. If the U.S. had its airspace violated by Mexican bombers tomorrow, we would shoot first and ask questions later. If Denmark invaded Scotland tomorrow, the U.K. would have to remove them. Even if the U.K. had violated Denmark's sovereignty, the same would be true. A country that lacks the ability to control actions within its own borders loses the respect of the international community. A violation of sovereignty thus cannot be tolerated at the risk of a total loss of governmental legitimacy in a short amount of time. There have been international incidents over much, much less.

So if the United States violates the sovereignty of Pakistan there is really only one acceptable response for the Pakistanis: send in the troops. Quite frankly, it is unlikely that Pakistan would fire on U.S. troops unless we forced their hand. They probably know better. But they would certainly shoot down an unmanned Predator drone in their airspace if they could, and they would probably start by firing warning shots at anything with a human on board. The U.S. would do the same thing in their situation.

But even the Pakistanis must admit that the results from such an occurrence would be hilarious. After all, the Pakistanis are either too weak or too corrupt to drive a bunch of refugee terrorists from their territory. Could they really stop the U.S. of

A? It seems doubtful. The only reason that the Pakistanis would be forced to try is that the U.S. is high-profile enough to make news with their sovereignty violations. Unlike the low-profile Taliban and al-Qaeda, the U.S. military makes the front page when it crosses the border, and it does it in decidedly larger numbers. Furthermore, the threat to Pakistan's government by the Taliban is pretty small, as they have fewer than ten thousand fighters at their disposal. The threat to their status as a sovereign nation, however, is greatly threatened by the presence of U.S. soldiers on their soil.

So they would be forced to react, but before they could the U.S. would point out that we had only committed the same crime against international law that the Taliban and al-Qaeda committed when they entered Pakistan. Why should the Pakistani military be used against the U.S. but not the Taliban, especially as the U.S. is just trying to enforce Pakistani law against the Taliban? As this is a great point, the Pakistanis would be held accountable for an answer on the international stage. There are two answers. The first, as we mentioned is because of the U.S.'s visibility. The second is because they don't really want the Taliban out. They want the U.S. destabilized. And it is that sad fact which has driven the duplicity behind U.S./Pakistani relations since September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **PRO Analysis**

Defending President Obama's plan for Afghanistan will require that you make a full and logical argument. You need to establish a need for his plan (harms), a lack of a solution in the status quo (inherency), the significance of the problem (significance), and how Obama's plan will solve this problem (solvency). You also need to make the "problem" in this setup the U.S.'s best interests, whatever they may be, in order to make sure you're topical (topicality). The fact of the matter is that policy stock issues didn't come from just anywhere. They are the logical requirements for the passage of any policy.

So let's talk about the significance of Afghanistan. The country is located in one of the most important geopolitical locations in the world. In terms of resources, it is located right next to some of the largest deposits of oil in the world. Iran and Russia, specifically, possess some of the largest reserves of the world's oil. These two nations are also two we would like to keep an eye on, for various reasons. The U.S. fully anticipates needing to take military action against Iran at some point in time in the future, and Afghanistan would be a logical base of operations. In terms of location, there is really no better colony for the United States to have than Afghanistan.

Adding harms to significance, the current situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating past the point of salvagability. Taliban forces have never been eradicated from the region, but reports indicate that they now have a permanent presence in over 80% of the country, defined as one or more insurgent attack averaged per week. If opposition fighters have a permanent presence in 80% of a country, when that country should have a permanent insurgent presence of 0%, there is a real problem.

Momentum is definitely on the Taliban's side as well. They have increased the rate and scope of their attacks, brought in foreign consultants to help with their military efforts, and established effective semi-permanent bases in Pakistan. We have narrowly avoided major uprisings in the extreme north and south of the country, and our head commander in the area is convinced that we are outright losing the war.

Let's talk about the possible consequences of Afghanistan as a failed state, which according to the U.S. Foreign Policy magazine is about as likely as any other outcome at this point in time. If the current government under Karzai fails then either the Taliban or something equally unsatisfactory would come to power – or nothing at all, with increased regional and sectional warfare. Either way, the U.S. loses any military presence that it had in the region and an entire country is destabilized. We lose access to resources and we have another disaffected

population growing to hate the United States of America. Afghanistan becomes the same safe haven for terrorism that it was prior to the 2001 invasion, and world poppy production skyrockets in order to fund all of the illegal activity occurring in the country. Poppy growth is already a huge issue, but at least the Taliban was able to control when it was in power. Karzai seems unable to halt that, even though he is almost as corrupt as the Taliban.

And what was being done in the status quo to prevent further destabilization? Really, nothing. Obama has added troops since he took office, but the number there is still far short of what it needs to be. Even post-surge we will lack the forces to fulfill the best estimate our generals gave to us, so it is safe to say that there is a general absence of an inherent barrier in the context of this resolution.

Solvency is another problem entirely. If this were a policy round the pro would have a very difficult time with this, since there is nothing conclusive to demonstrate that the surge will work in Afghanistan. But there seems to be no doubt that a 50% increase in the number of American troops will lead to an increase in solvency over time. Surely, it can't hurt, but a positive effect must be proven in order to win the round. And you can attempt to prove this in a number of ways. On the theoretical level, explain what the troops are intended for. They are being sent to Afghanistan so that we can halt the Taliban's momentum,

stabilize the region and provide security for its people. Then, the Americans will leave.

On a practical level, you should talk about the opinions of people on the ground asking for more troops. There are plenty of them, and they are easy to find. Once you established conclusively the need for such a force, and how it will be used, say that success or failure will be dictated by our tactics rather than the surge as an overall strategy. There is no doubt that 30,000 is a step in the right direction, and one that will continue to be taken if need be. Overall, I would quote Obama as saying that sending these troops was in our “vital national interest.” As he is the president, I would trust his judgment above that of your opponent.

But overall, the point and plan for Afghanistan is pretty obvious. We send more troops, do better on the ground, create the conditions for a transfer of power, and then transfer it. The biggest criticisms are those on which you should spend the most of your time. We’ll call them Pakistan and Timeline.

The Pakistan attack from your opponent will hold that it is not a good idea to invade Pakistan’s sovereignty. This is true, for all of the reasons cited earlier. But there are several reasons to discount this attack. First, U.S. Predator drones have been violating Pakistani airspace for some time, with little to no repercussion.

Second, the U.S. is preponderantly strong in a military sense; we can do whatever

we want in a third-world country like Pakistan. If they can't repel the Taliban, they can't repel us. Third, we violate sovereignty in an effort to support Pakistan against the Taliban, international criminals who are also violating Pakistan's sovereignty. Altogether, there are few reasons to think that violating Pakistan's sovereignty will cause enough of a backlash to vote against this resolution.

Moving on to the Timeline attack, it is true that there are those who do not believe in the notion of a timeline for withdrawal. Obama believes that it will send the proper message to the Afghan people, and he is probably right about that. The Afghans do not want a permanent U.S. presence and neither do we, so that much is certain. But Senator McCain and others have noted that the presence of a timeline for withdrawal could just push the Taliban and al-Qaeda underground until Coalition forces leave. This makes a scary amount of sense, in that it is exactly what I would do if I were the Taliban. But the fact is that an open-ended commitment is not what we need in Afghanistan, because of mistakes that we have already made in Iraq. Anything likely to be seen as a repeat of that performance will be looked upon poorly.

The pro is the easy side of this resolution, as most people think already that the actions contained therein were necessary and reasonable. But to succeed in the vast majority of rounds keep it focused and deal quickly with any objections raised. If you can do that you should be fine.

## CON Analysis

This is going to be an uphill battle. President Obama has already framed the Afghanistan debate so effectively that the majority of the American people are in the palm of his hand as far as the war goes. And this strategy is so incredibly sensible that it will be hard to fight throughout the course of the round.

If there is one piece of advice that I can give for the con above all else it is to pick a strategy ahead of time and stick with it. Learn it well, and make sure that it is internally consistent. If there is discord in your approach the pro will just look more sensible and targeted. And yes, this does essentially force you into an advocacy. Since you are arguing that there is at least one thing to do better than Obama's plan necessarily, you had better be prepared to argue what it is. That is all.

That being said, let's move on to framework. You have three basic options: go left, go right, go strategic. Going left implies a liberal criticism of Obama's plan. After all, war is wrong, because innocent bunnies sometimes get hurt in the manufacture of modern weaponry, and armies create deforestation everywhere. Or some other leftist critique, whatever it may be. Criticize this action on the grounds that all war is wrong, and plenty of judges will at least honestly listen to you make the case. Criticize it on the libertarian-left principle of non-

interventionism, if you like. The U.S. has no business being involved in Afghanistan longer than it has to be. We need to withdraw from there as a permanent military presence immediately and continue the search for Bin Laden in some other form. The problem is that nobody likes this idea except for Ron Paul.

Going right implies a conservative critique. You could go neoconservative and argue that his plan for eventual withdrawal is antithetical to our needs in the region for permanent basis, but this will be unpopular with the judging pool. On the other hand, neocons make a very convincing case for the need for permanent bases. They might just be useful. Traditional conservatives simply think that we have a job to do in Afghanistan and would like to see it through to completion – especially the capture or kill of Osama bin Laden. They mostly side with the president on this issue, but tend to think that setting a timeline is a bad idea.

This brings us to the strategic critiques, the first of which is the timeline critique. You could very well follow John McCain in his footsteps of calling for a total absence of timeline, instead allowing military commanders a greater amount of input in those decisions than an arbitrary schedule would allow for. This has its advantages. First, it avoids the problem of having insurgents simply hide until forces have withdrawn. This has long been a concern of many knowledgeable individuals, and it is noteworthy. Second, it allows for more control by the military's standards, rather than those of a fickle electorate. If Americans are

serious about not messing things up, they will let professionals do their job by their standards, which are respectable according to anyone's benchmark. If you want a list of all the problems associated with this approach, check the opposing analysis. Counter them by saying that our primary mission has always been the eradication of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Until those objectives are reached, there will be U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The next strategic critique is Pakistan. Your critique would be that the Pakistanis can not continue to ignore the strategic bombings in their sovereign space by U.S. Predator drones, and could certainly not tolerate the high-profile presence of U.S. soldiers conducting operations on Pakistani soil. As both of these are components of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, the plan would inherently trigger war.

This is one of those rare moments when a Public Forum debater gets the opportunity to argue against some outrageous impacts. You'll see all sorts of links to Pakistan, including nuclear war with India, ground war with India, nuclear war with Russia and many others that would be hilarious if they weren't so plausible. Use these outrageous impacts to your advantage. Argue against them and argue against their more reasonable (and likely) counterparts, and you'll turn this side of the debate to your favor.

There are other options as well, but the important thing to take from this is that every legitimate strategic critique of Obama's plan is fertile ground for criticism of the resolution as well. If you can find it and justify it, and make it seem like a big enough deal, you should be able to make a strategic critique of the plan.

There is absolutely no doubt that the con is the tougher side of the resolution. It's important that you make that point clear, because it might be necessary to counter some judges' bias. But you have one weapon at your disposal that the pro doesn't: the word "best" in the resolution. Effectively, this means that if you can provide an Afghanistan plan with any sort of competitive advantage over the one proposed by our Commander-in-Chief, you win the debate round. The pro standard specified by the resolution is so high as to be prohibitive. All in all, you should be able to do at least one thing better than Obama, especially since you have a partner to help. Seriously. Give yourself a better advocacy, improving upon Obama's plan in some small way. If it's successful, you win.

It's an uphill battle, but a clever debater can strategize well enough to win rounds on the con, and in large numbers. Have fun figuring out how it works for you.

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## **PRO EVIDENCE**

## **PRO - 1) Drone attacks are a key part of the US strategy in Afghanistan**

**Christian Science Monitor, 2009** [Drone aircraft in a stepped-up war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Dec 11, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2009/1211/Drone-aircraft-in-a-stepped-up-war-in-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>]

**It will take some time for 30,000 more US troops to deploy to Afghanistan, as called for by President Obama's new Afghan strategy. Already in operation, however, may be another part of the plan: an increase in covert strikes against militant targets by missiles fired from unmanned Predator drones.**

**Evidence of this surfaced Tuesday, with reports that the US launched a drone attack in northwest Pakistan that may have killed a key member of Al Qaeda.**

"Nothing has been definitively confirmed, but it's possible that a senior Al Qaeda figure has died," a US official told the Reuters news service.

**The US government has not officially talked about the strike, nor is it likely to. The drone program is a covert effort run by the CIA.** Neither Osama bin Laden nor Ayman al-Zawahiri was the likely target, however, according to wire service reports.

## **PRO - 2) Drone attacks have been very effective**

**CNN, 2009** [Pakistan a key factor in U.S. Afghan policy, Dec 2, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/12/02/us.obama.pakistan/>]

**While there's no agreement between the United States and Pakistan to deploy U.S. troops into that country, there have been drone strikes against militant targets in Pakistan's northwestern tribal areas near the Afghan border. CIA director Leon Panetta said in May that airstrikes aimed at al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan have been "very effective."**  
**The U.S. military in neighboring Afghanistan does not comment on the attacks, which typically target Islamic militants in the border region. But the United States is the only country operating in the region known to have the capability to launch missiles from remote-controlled aircraft.**

### **PRO - 3) We are now poised for victory in Afghanistan**

**Kagan**, the director of the Critical Threats Project at AEI, **and Kristol** is editor of The Weekly Standard [Frederick and William, Support the President, Dec 14, <http://www.aei.org/article/101394>]

**All of these changes create the conditions in which the deployment of additional American combat forces may be able to achieve decisive results over the next 18 months.** This would be even easier if our civilian leadership in the country integrated their efforts with the military's as was done in Iraq in 2007. **Ambassador Ryan Crocker and his team were almost as crucial to our success in Iraq as General David Petraeus. And the fact that Crocker and Petraeus worked hand-in-glove was of inestimable value. President Obama owes it to our troops--and to the American people--to try to replicate that happy conjunction of civilian and military effort in Afghanistan.**

**Nothing is certain in war, and the enemy always gets a vote, but we can be confident that the strategy and forces that will be in place in Afghanistan early next year have a good chance of success.** And success will mean more than merely reversing the Taliban's momentum. Taken together with the recent achievements of the Pakistani military against that country's separate but related Taliban movements, success in Afghanistan could mark a turning point in the struggle against Islamism in South Asia. In this way, our efforts over the next couple of years in Afghanistan are not simply the assumption of a distressing duty; they are the seizing of an important opportunity in the global struggle in which we're engaged.

## **PRO - 4) Drone strikes are successful**

**Cookman**, Special Assistant for National Security at American Progress, 2009  
[Colin, Threats, Options and Risks in Pakistan, March 5,  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pakistan\\_strikes.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pakistan_strikes.html)]

**Analysis of the strikes' targets suggests that, at a tactical level, the strikes have been successful in eliminating several senior Al Qaeda operatives tasked with organizing attacks in Pakistan and the West. At least 12 of those reported killed have subsequently been identified as top Al Qaeda figures, including:**

Abu Khabab al Masri – chief of the terror organization's weapons of mass destruction program

Usama al-Kini – reportedly involved in the 2000 bombing of the U.S.S. Cole and said to have been responsible for Al Qaeda operations in Pakistan at the time of their deaths

Khalid Habib – chief of external operations against Western targets

Abu Laith al-Libi – senior Al Qaeda spokesman and Libyan Islamic Fighting Group commander

Rashid Rauf – a fugitive from Pakistani custody since 2007, and believed to be involved in the 2006 U.K.-based transatlantic planes bombing plot.

**While many of the Al Qaeda operatives killed have subsequently been replaced, the loss of top talent and the pressure placed on the organization's ability to operate freely does appear to have had a real impact on its effectiveness.**

## **PRO - 5) Drone strikes are critical to US national security**

**Cookman**, Special Assistant for National Security at American Progress, 2009  
[Colin, Threats, Options and Risks in Pakistan, March 5,  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pakistan\\_strikes.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pakistan_strikes.html)]

**As the administration focuses more attention and resources on Pakistan and Afghanistan as central national security concerns for the United States, all indications are that the covert missile strike program will continue, and it will remain a contentious issue. Preventing Al Qaeda terrorists from carrying out large-scale attacks on the United States and its allies must remain a critical priority for the Obama administration, and the use of precision strike capability is still a powerful potential asset for the United States**

## PRO - 6) Afghanistan is restoring the rule of law

**While corruption in Afghanistan is rampant, there are courageous Afghans trying to build a new society by fighting corruption, crime and extremism. These Afghans include judges, prosecutors and defense lawyers who have been trained by the Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan. They have expressed a strong desire to establish the rule of law in Afghanistan by reforming the judicial system.** An example of their success is the Counter Narcotics Tribunal in Kabul, which is convicting an increasing number of narco-traffickers in transparent and fair court proceedings.

**The number of female judges and prosecutors is also increasing each year. These successes have come at a price - a rising number of assassinations of judges, prosecutors and lawyers and threats against their families. These are some of the "capable partners" the President seeks to strengthen through civilian training programs as well as to protect -- with better trained Afghan security forces.**

## PRO - 7) The risks of Afghan instability trump the risks of not trying

**Ackerman**, security writer for the Washington Independent, **2009** [Spencer, I Guess I Should Say Where My Head Is At On Escalation In Afghanistan, Nov 30, <http://attackerman.firedoglake.com/2009/11/30/i-guess-i-should-say-where-my-head-is-at-on-escalation-in-afghanistan/>]

**I would say the case for escalation is a case based on the national interest. That is, escalation in Afghanistan is necessary to secure our legitimate security interest against al-Qaeda. This can be done by adopting a counterinsurgency approach to deprive al-Qaeda of the strategic depth provided by its Afghan allies through addressing root-cause or 'demand-side' reasons why Afghans actively or passively bandwagon with the insurgency: lack of governance; lack of resources; and lack of security. I consider those to be achievable goals, but it's quite possible they're not, and the time that all of this could have been achieved is passed. I would be lying if I said I could know for sure. But I think the risks of continuing Afghan instability, providing al-Qaeda with greater strategic depth, trump the risks of not trying. I don't like the fact that I find this to be a compelling argument, for what it's worth.**

## **PRO - 8) A Taliban victory in Afghanistan would destabilize the entire world**

Riedel, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2009  
[Bruce, President Obama's Afghan Gamble, Brookings Institution, Dec 3,  
[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1203\\_afghanistan\\_riedel.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1203_afghanistan_riedel.aspx)]

**The impact of a Taliban victory now would be felt most immediately in Pakistan where a weak civilian government is already tottering. The Pakistani army, which has long had close ties to parts of the syndicate (especially Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Afghan Taliban), would have to make adjustments to live with a victorious Taliban next door. The Pakistani Taliban would be emboldened to push for a jihadist state in Islamabad. India's own enormous Muslim minority would face the danger of radicalization. Central Asia would be infested with Taliban inspired violence. Moderate Muslim voices throughout the Islamic world would be on the defensive.**

**Last week Indian Prime Minister Singh delivered a strong message to the United States – don't go wobbly on Afghanistan.** The soft-spoken Singh was very direct and candid in describing the stakes in an interview with the Washington Post on the eve of his meetings with Obama. **Singh said "a victory for the Taliban in Afghanistan would have catastrophic consequences for the world, particularly for South Asia, for Central Asia and for the Middle East. Religious fundamentalism in the 1980s was used to defeat the Soviet Union. If this same group of people that defeated the Soviet Union now defeats the other major power, this would embolden them in a manner which could have catastrophic consequences for the world."**

## **PRO - 9) More troops good – changes battlefield momentum**

O'Hanlon, Director of Research and Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, 2009  
[Michael, Four Reasons for More Troops in Afghanistan, Dec 1, Brookings Institution,  
[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1201\\_afghanistan\\_ohanlon.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1201_afghanistan_ohanlon.aspx)]

**The last two or three years, the Taliban-led resistance in Afghanistan has had the momentum. McChrystal's changes, combined with the arrival of forces approved by Obama in March, have begun to arrest the slide. But while we may no longer be losing this struggle, we aren't winning either -- and Afghans know it. As one tribal leader in Uruzgan province recently put it, explaining why he had half of his tribal youth fighting for the Taliban and half for the government, "I can't tell who's going to win yet." We need to make him, and others like him, realize that NATO and the Afghan government are going to succeed on the battlefield.**

## **PRO - 10) More troops are critical to neutralize Taiban sanctuaries**

**O'Hanlon**, Director of Research and Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, **2009**  
[Michael, Four Reasons for More Troops in Afghanistan, Dec 1, Brookings  
Institution,  
[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1201\\_afghanistan\\_ohanlon.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1201_afghanistan_ohanlon.aspx)]

**In Nawa, in Helmand province, U.S. Marines have cleared the area of Taliban and can now patrol without body armor. But in nearby Marja, no clearing has occurred, and enemy forces can use the town as a safe area from which to mount attacks** -- including, against key political leaders and friendly forces in Nawa. **This is the kind of dilemma we face with our current number of deployed forces.** And in Kandahar province, the Taliban is increasingly able to infiltrate Kandahar City to intimidate the population. **We need reinforcements there so that limited numbers of NATO soldiers can establish joint stations with Afghans within the city -- and so that the approaches to the city can be secured by friendly forces and kept out of enemy hands. Again, having a patchwork of relatively secure areas right next to enemy sanctuaries is unstable. We need to consolidate these areas of security and control. Only with more forces is that possible.**

## **PRO - 11) The Taliban 'waiting out the US' is a good thing**

**Think Progress, 2009** ['Waiting Us Out' In Afghanistan...Would Be Great., Dec 7, <http://wonkroom.thinkprogress.org/2009/12/07/waiting-us-out-in-afghanistan/>]

While **conservatives** have generally been pleased with President Obama's decision to send 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan, many **have expressed disappointment at the president's promulgating Summer 2011 as a goal for beginning the handover of security responsibilities to Afghans, suggesting that announcing any sort of drawdown goal will only cause the Taliban to hunker down and "wait us out."**

Elrod at the Moderate Voice has a good response:

**Quite simply, the Taliban does not have the luxury of "waiting us out" for 18 months. If they survive that long then it is because we failed in our ground-level counterinsurgency policy, not because we telegraphed our intention not to stay indefinitely. And if they do try and lay low and wait us out, the Afghan army and government will have had that much more time to establish its legitimate control over the entirety of southern Afghanistan.**

**If killing the enemy were the main goal, then their decision to hunker down and wait for the U.S. to begin leaving might be a problem. But as the main goal of the new COIN strategy in Afghanistan is to secure the population, build trust with local communities through effective delivery of services, all the while increasing Afghan capacity to continue doing those things when we leave, it's really not. The Taliban "waiting us out" would just give the U.S. more time and space to make Afghanistan a more inhospitable place for the Taliban.**

## **PRO - 12) Failure in Afghanistan would destroy American power**

**Wright**, senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, **2009** [Robin, The real stakes in Afghanistan, Washington Post, Dec 10, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/09/AR2009120903678.html>]

**Failure by the world's mightiest military power, backed by the largest military alliance, to uproot the Taliban** -- a force without an air force, armored corps, long-range artillery, satellite intelligence or powerful foreign backer -- **would vividly illustrate the limits of U.S. power. The consequences could dwarf those of the defeat in Vietnam, even if the loss of life was smaller.**

**The era of a unipolar or uni-power world is effectively over, but a U.S. failure in Afghanistan and Pakistan could mark its formal end, just as it did for the bipolar world when the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. Indeed, the period from Vietnam to Afghanistan -- with withdrawals under pressure from Hezbollah extremists in Lebanon and warlords in Somalia along the way -- could come to be seen as the period marking the demise of American power.**

## **PRO - 13) Afghan failure leads to civil war**

**Associated Press, 2009** [Gates: Afghan Failure Means 'Civil War', Dec 2, <http://www.newser.com/story/75273/gates-afghan-failure-means-civil-war.html>]

**Defense chief Robert Gates and other members of the Obama administration took to Capitol Hill today to sell President Obama's plan to send 30,000 additional troops. "Failure in Afghanistan would mean a Taliban takeover of much, if not most, of the country and likely a renewed civil war,"** Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee. **"Taliban-ruled areas could in short order become, once again, a sanctuary for al-Qaeda."**

## **PRO - 14) Failure in Afghanistan leads to a radical fundamentalist nuclear Pakistan**

**Coll**, president of the New America Foundation, **2009** [Steve, What if we Fail in Afghanistan?, The New Yorker, Nov 16, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2009/11/what-if-we-fail-in-afghanistan.html#entry-more>]

**If the Quetta Shura** (Mullah Omar's outfit, the former Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, now in exile in Pakistan) **regained power in Kandahar or Kabul, it would undoubtedly interpret its triumph as a ticket to further ambition in Pakistan. Al Qaeda's leaders, if they survived American drone attacks, would encourage this narrative and support it as best they could. The Pakistani Taliban would likely be energized, armed and financed by the Afghan Taliban as they pursued their own revolutionary ambitions in Islamabad. In response, the international community would undoubtedly fall back in defense of the Pakistani constitutional state, such as it is. However, the West would find the Pakistan Army and its allies in Riyadh and perhaps even Beijing even more skeptical than they are now about the American-led agenda. In this scenario, as in the past, Pakistan's generals would be tempted to negotiate an accommodation with the Taliban, Afghan and Pakistani alike, to the greatest possible extent, in defiance of Washington's preferences. The net result might well be an increase in Islamist influence over the Pakistani nuclear arsenal, if not an outright loss of control.**

## **PRO - 15) Failure in Afghanistan would lead to an Indo-Pakistani nuclear war**

**Coll**, president of the New America Foundation, **2009** [Steve, What if we Fail in Afghanistan?, The New Yorker, Nov 16, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2009/11/what-if-we-fail-in-afghanistan.html#entry-more>]

**The Taliban and Al Qaeda are anti-American, yes. But they are equally determined to wage war against India's secular, Hindu-dominated democracy. The Pakistani Taliban, whose momentum would be increased by Taliban success in Afghanistan, consist in part of Punjab-based, ardently anti-Indian Islamist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, which carried out the spectacular raid on Mumbai a year ago. The probable knock-on effect of a second Taliban revolution Afghanistan would be to increase the likelihood of irregular Islamist attacks from Pakistan against Indian targets—not only the traditional target set in Indian-held Kashmir, but in New Delhi, Mumbai, and other cities, as has occurred periodically during the last decade. In time, democratic Indian governments would be pressed by their electorates to respond with military force. This in turn would present, repetitively, the problem of managing the role of nuclear weapons in a prospective fourth Indo-Pakistani war.**

## PRO - 16) Failure in Afghanistan leads to attacks in the US

**Coll**, president of the New America Foundation, **2009** [Steve, What if we Fail in Afghanistan?, The New Yorker, Nov 16, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2009/11/what-if-we-fail-in-afghanistan.html#entry-more>]

Deliberately, I would list this problem as fourth in severity in my initial straw-man forecast. **Al Qaeda's current capability to carry out disruptive attacks on American soil is very low. Still, it is absurd to think, as some in the Obama Administration apparently have argued, that Al Qaeda would not be strengthened by a Taliban revolution in Afghanistan. Of course it would. Whether this strengthening would directly or quickly threaten the security of American civilians is another question. London might well be more vulnerable than New York during the ensuing five or ten years after an Afghan Taliban revolution. The Afghan Taliban are essentially inseparable from the Pakistani Taliban. Because of the size and character of the Pakistani diaspora in Britain, currently, there are about six hundred thousand annual visits by civilians between the two countries, a flow of individuals that is almost impossible to police effectively. Therefore, as recent terrorist-criminal cases in Britain document, bad guys periodically get through the border. By comparison, the post-9/11 American border is much harder for Pakistani- or Afghanistan-originated terrorists to penetrate. Still, in a civil war-ridden, Taliban-influenced Afghan state Al Qaeda's playbook against the United States would expand. As 9/11 and the current creativity of the regionally focussed Taliban amply demonstrate, their potential should not be complacently underestimated. If they did get through and score another lucky goal, it is easy to imagine the prospective consequences for American politics and for the constitution.**

## **PRO - 17) Obama's pledge of more troops is critical to progress in Afghanistan**

**CNN, 2009** [McChrystal: Uprooting bin Laden and Taliban key to winning in Afghanistan, Dec 18,  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/12/08/mcchrystal.afghanistan/>]

**McChrystal said that the influx of additional troops should bring "significant progress" in the war by next summer, and by next December he should be able to "lay out progress" and show evidence of success in a report he will present.**

**"My expectation is the insurgency will be less robust in the summer of 2011, significantly so, and it is also my expectation that the Afghan security forces will be more robust," McChrystal said. "I see confidently in the summer of 2011 that beginning the reduction of forces will be appropriate, the pace and scope of which needs to be conditions-based on how strong is insurgency at that point."**

## **PRO - 18) Now with more troops US will win in Afghanistan**

**AFP, 2009** [Gates tells troops in Afghanistan success in reach, Dec 9, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hvVJZVzaetajCNvbiw9Jin2iTtIA>]

**US Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Wednesday** toured the nerve centre of NATO command in Afghanistan, **telling soldiers that success was in reach, despite the worsening eight-year war with the Taliban.**

Gates visited the NATO-run International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) joint operation centre where around 170 people from 42 nations work and praised improved cooperation between the different allied countries.

**"We have all the pieces coming together to be successful here,"** Gates told staff in the imposing command room full of banks of telephones and computers where commanders coordinate operations throughout Afghanistan.

**He spoke after the overall NATO commander in Afghanistan predicted the US troop surge will reverse the momentum of Taliban insurgents "by this time next year" and ensure their ultimate defeat.**

**"By the summer of 2011, it will be clear to the Afghan people that the insurgency will not win, giving them the chance to side with their government,"** General Stanley McChrystal told US lawmakers in Washington.

Related article: US general confident on surge

**McChrystal**, who stands at the centre of a renewed push in the Afghan war, said he **was confident of success because the Taliban were unpopular and Afghans see foreign troops as a "necessary bridge to future security and stability."**

**The additional 30,000 troops ordered by President Barack Obama will turn back insurgent momentum "by this time next year" and cut off the Taliban from the population,** McChrystal, said.

## **PRO - 19) Timetable key to successful Afghan takeover**

**Miami Herald, 2009** [Troop level boost in Afghanistan needed, Dec 11, <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/editorials/story/1376559.html>]

**“This is the hard part,”** Gen. McChrystal said in Senate testimony. **“The most difficult task we have is to create credible governments -- governance at the local level that reaches to the national level.”**

**President Karzai, he's talking about you.**

**Afghanistan's leader presides over one of the world's most corrupt governments, and one of the weakest -- a “pretend central government,”** a senator called it. **That's why President Obama's strategy, which Gen. McChrystal said he fully supports, sets a date to begin withdrawing troops. It is the best way to put Afghanistan's leaders on notice that there is no longer an open-ended commitment and the clock is ticking toward the date when U.S. and allied forces stand down.**

**In outlining details of the strategy set forth by the president, Gen. McChrystal told one senator that success depends on how readily Afghans adapt to the new reality: “That's exactly the heart of the strategy, sir, create more security but do it shoulder to shoulder, partnering with the police and the army.”**

## PRO - 20) Timeline key to success

Lynch, the director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at George Washington University, 2009 [Marc, Just Stick to It, NY Times, Dec 11, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/opinion/11lynch.html>]

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S critics argue that his plan to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan starting in July 2011 signals a fatal lack of resolve, inviting the Taliban to wait out a feckless America, or else has no credibility. In fact, the deadline is crucial to the strategy. Yes, there are many reasons to be skeptical of the prospects for the new plan, from the hopeless corruption in Kabul to the difficulties of state-building. But a clearly communicated timeline increases the odds of success. The July 2011 date should be understood as an inflection point, not as the end of the American military mission. There is no "mission accomplished" here. The American commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue. The pace and location of withdrawals will be dictated by conditions on the ground and, indeed, the date itself was carefully chosen based on the military's best calculations of improved security and political conditions. It was not drawn from a hat, or determined by the domestic political calendar. The deadline is essential politically because it will provide the necessary urgency for Afghans to make the institutional reforms that will ensure their own survival. An open-ended commitment creates a terrible moral hazard in which Afghan leaders, assuming American troops will always be there to protect them, may make risky or counterproductive decisions. A limited, conditional commitment creates the leverage needed to generate the institutional transformation necessary to cement any gains made by the military.**

## PRO - 21) Troop surge solves the risk of a timeline

Lynch, the director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at George Washington University, 2009 [Marc, Just Stick to It, NY Times, Dec 11, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/opinion/11lynch.html>]

**President Obama's deadline will not compromise the military mission. The surge of troops is meant to blunt the momentum of the Taliban, establish security and provide space for the spread of governance and legitimacy. Should the Taliban choose to retreat and wait out the American mission, this would be a blessing, not a curse. It would allow America to establish control more easily and help build effective local and national governments..**

## PRO - 22) Obama's plan enables success in Afghanistan

Washington Post, 2009 [Afghan war commander calls new strategy achievable, Dec 8, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/08/AR2009120801552.html?hpid=topnews>]

**Gen. Stanley McChrystal said he supports Obama's new war strategy - as did Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, who had voiced misgivings previously. The new battle plan includes an 18-month timeline until the first U.S troops come home.**

Democrats will likely try to get the general to say the plan amounts to a muddle. Republicans plan to press him on whether the 2011 deadline encourages the Taliban insurgents. **McChrystal said Obama's decision "recognizes that the next 18 months will likely be decisive, and ultimately, enables success."**

## PRO - 23) Afghanistan is not the graveyard of empires

CNN, 2009 [Is Afghanistan really a 'graveyard of empires?', Dec 7, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/12/07/afghanistan.graveyard/>]

**"Afghanistan is certainly, historically, a difficult place to conquer and to rule,** and the 'graveyard of empires' does suggest some things that are true -- but they need to be strongly qualified," said Porter.

**Though empires tend to fall after their Afghan skirmishes,** he says, **for the British this was largely down to World War II, for the Soviets, it was ideological crisis in eastern Europe and for Alexander the Great it was a failure to ensure the stable succession of his Asian empire.**

**"The notion of a 'graveyard of empires' is actually a false extrapolation from something that is true -- that there is tactical and strategic difficulty,"** Porter says.

## **PRO - 24) US troops won't go into Pakistan**

**The Washington Independent, 2009** [McChrystal Resists Saying US Troops Will Enter Pakistan, Dec 10,  
<http://washingtonindependent.com/70429/mcchrystal-resists-saying-u-s-troops-will-enter-pakistan>]

**Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.) asked if U.S. troops “will be able to enter Pakistan,” the first headache of the morning for Gen. Stanley McChrystal.**

**“My authorities stop at the border,” McChrystal replied. He began to say that he works closely with the Pakistani army chief on a “strategic partnership,” but Scott is dissatisfied. He asked the question again. “Sir, I’m really out of my lane to discuss that,” McChrystal responded.**

## **PRO - 25) US troop surge is key to victory in Afghanistan**

**Hadley**, national security adviser to President George W. Bush, **2009** [Stephen, A Continued Surge, Dec 10, Washington Post,  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/10/AR2009121003439\\_2.html?sid=ST2009121103458](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/10/AR2009121003439_2.html?sid=ST2009121103458)]

**The Obama administration's just-completed review seeks to deal with a situation that has further deteriorated this year. Equally important as more troops is the strategy of using these troops to provide security for the Afghan people, operating space for the accompanying "civilian surge" and an opportunity for Afghans to build their own governmental and security institutions.**

It will take time and great effort, but we can succeed by convincing friends, foes and our own forces that we are committed to success and will not fail; motivating and enabling the Afghan government and people to accept greater responsibility for their future; and helping Pakistan in its effort to put down its own Taliban threat and control its territory.

The last goal is paramount. A destabilized Pakistan would threaten regional stability and ensure that Afghanistan could not be stabilized. Success will depend on proving to Pakistan that it has an enduring partner in the United States.

**Our strategy can succeed in Afghanistan if we are committed to succeeding, not just getting out.**

## **PRO - 26) Taliban ranks are weakening**

**CNN, 2009** [McChrystal: Taliban ranks weakening, Dec 9, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/US/12/09/afghanistan.mcchrystal/index.html#cnnSTC> Text]

**Rank-and-file Taliban fighters in Afghanistan are tired and weakening, with some making offers to drop out of the conflict, the top U.S. commander there said.**

In a rare in-depth interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour on Wednesday, Gen. Stanley McChrystal said Taliban leaders who operate from safe havens remain confident and optimistic. But **recent operations by U.S. and allied troops have pushed back the Taliban "in a number of areas" and caused "a tremendous amount of angst" in the Islamic militia's ranks, he said.**

**"Their fighters are tired. We see a number that have already made extensive overtures to reintegrate back into the government,"** McChrystal said. **"So I think we've got an insurgency that is sitting safely in what they consider are safe havens. They are trying to exhort their forces who are closer to the fight, but the forces are having a tremendous problem right now and tremendous weakening."**

## **CONFIDENTIAL**

## **CON - 1) Obama's plan won't work – timetable is unrealistic and dangerous**

**Wall Street Journal, 2009** [Exit Plan Critical to Afghan Buildup, Nov 17, [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125840201623250945.html?mod=googlenews\\_ws](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125840201623250945.html?mod=googlenews_ws) j]

**The strategy also faces a profound practical problem: Poor Afghanistan simply can't afford to sustain the kind of robust security force the administration desires. Years of American aid in the billions likely will be needed to pull off that feat.**

**But the most insidious problem is that setting hard timetables for a military withdrawal almost inevitably aids the enemy. Departure schedules, if known publicly, simply make it clear how long the bad guys must endure to simply outlast rather than defeat the Americans. That is why military leaders blanch at the thought of setting precise timetables.**

## **CON - 2) Obama has not presented us with a definition of success**

**The cause may seem just but the "surge" seems flawed. And if the enemy continues to have safe havens next door in Pakistan what good will extra troops do in Afghanistan?** Will Americans be in Afghanistan for eighteen months, five years or longer training the Afghans.

**What is success in Afghanistan for the United States?** Ambassador Jawad defines success for Afghanistan as: "Success is to prevent the return of Al Qaeda and the Taliban and to have successful Afghan institutions."

**How does President Obama define success for America in Afghanistan? So far, we all seem very confused by the new "surge" and what will be a success for the United States. The Obama administration needs to do a better job of defining our overall goal and mission in Afghanistan and explaining exactly why Americans are being asked to fight and die in this far away country.**

### **CON - 3) Afghan war will cost \$10 billion per year**

**New York Times, 2009** [Petraeus Warns of a Long and Expensive Mission in Afghanistan, Dec 9,  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/10/world/asia/10policy.html?ref=world>]

**America's involvement in Afghanistan could stretch on for years and cost upward of \$10 billion annually just to finance an adequate Afghan security force**, the overall commander in the region told Congress on Wednesday. **Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the commander, Gen. David H. Petraeus**, one of the military's most influential generals, **estimated that building and maintaining a combined army and police force of 400,000 — a size that American commanders believe may eventually be needed to fully secure the country — would cost more than \$10 billion a year**

### **CON - 4) Troop surge will lead to more violence.**

**Wall Street Journal, 2009** [U.S. Expects Surge to Exacerbate Afghan Violence, Dec 10,  
[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126037306926583583.html?mod=WSJ\\_hpp\\_MID\\_DLENexttoWhatsNewsThird](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126037306926583583.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_MID_DLENexttoWhatsNewsThird)]

**Gen. David Petraeus said in an interview that violence in Afghanistan would increase in months ahead with the arrival of tens of thousands of U.S. reinforcements**, underscoring the military and political challenges facing the Obama administration's Afghan war strategy.

**Gen. Petraeus, head of the military's Central Command, oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He said progress in Afghanistan was likely to take longer and be more uneven than in Iraq, where he oversaw the Bush administration's surge in 2007.**

## **CON - 5) Afghanistan will be harder than Iraq**

**Wall Street Journal, 2009** [U.S. Expects Surge to Exacerbate Afghan Violence, Dec 10,  
[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126037306926583583.html?mod=WSJ\\_hpp\\_MIDDLNexttoWhatsNewsThird](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126037306926583583.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_MIDDLNexttoWhatsNewsThird)]

**Gen. Petraeus said it would take at least a year to gauge whether the administration's retooled Afghan policy -- under which the U.S. will deploy 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan before beginning to withdraw them in July 2011 -- was succeeding or failing. President Barack Obama outlined the approach in a speech at West Point last week.**

**"The progress we expect won't be the kind of rapid reduction of violence that we started to see in Iraq eight months or so after the beginning of the surge," Gen. Petraeus said. "This will be a longer and harder fight."**

## **CON - 6) The Taliban don't need sanctuaries to launch attacks**

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6,  
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

**Obama made the threat of al-Qaeda's returning on the back of a Taliban victory the primary rationale for escalating the war in Afghanistan. But as many have pointed out, al-Qaeda doesn't need sanctuaries in order to plot terrorist attacks, and its leadership core is based in the neighboring tribal areas of Pakistan — which means that 100,000 U.S. troops are now being committed to a mission whose goal is to prevent a few hundred men from re-establishing a base of operations.**

## **CON - 7) More troops in Afghanistan create a nationalist backlash**

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

**And then there's the problem that having masses of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, for whatever reason, inevitably creates a nationalist backlash that fuels the insurgency — a problem that Defense Secretary Robert Gates had noted early in the debate. The fact that the Taliban is now effectively in control of as much as half of the country eight years after being routed by the U.S.-led invasion is a sign that the local population is at least more tolerant of an insurgency against foreign forces. Expanding the ground war may not solve this problem.** As University of Michigan historian Juan Cole wrote last week, **"The U.S. counter-insurgency plan assumes that Pashtun villagers dislike and fear the Taliban, and just need to be protected from them so as to stop the politics of intimidation. But what if the villagers are cousins of the Taliban and would rather support their clansmen than white Christian foreigners?"**

## **CON - 8) Afghan troops are not willing to be trained**

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

**The centerpiece of Obama's exit strategy is the training of Afghan security forces to take responsibility for fighting the Taliban, just as Iraqi forces have taken charge of security in Iraq. But Afghanistan is nothing like Iraq, and training may not be the decisive issue: although the U.S. has officially trained 94,000 Afghan soldiers, there's no sign of an effective Afghan security force capable of fighting the Taliban. Desertion rates are high — 1 in 4 soldiers trained last year, by some accounts. So are rates of drug addiction. Most important, the most effective elements of the military are dominated by ethnic Tajiks, which does little to help win support of the Pashtuns, the country's largest ethnic group and the one among which the insurgency is based. Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan had no powerful army or strong state before the U.S. went in — nor does it have the oil wealth that allows Iraq to pay for its own armed forces. There's also the question of whether they'll be willing to fight the Taliban on behalf of a foreign-backed government.**

## CON - 9) Karzai's failures preclude victory in Iraq

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

Aside from the serious allegations of ballot fraud in the recent vote, **the bigger legitimacy problem in Hamid Karzai's re-election was that only 1 in 4 registered voters actually turned out on election day. In the absence of any credible alternative, Washington will use Karzai's dependence on the West for funding and security to pressure him to deliver the sort of governance that can win popular support. But Karzai's government is widely seen as corrupt, ineffective and a tool in the hands of a foreign invader, and Afghans are mostly gloomy about the prospects for reforming it. While Karzai could be forced to respond to some egregious cases of corruption, his instinct will be to continue to use the power of patronage to broker local support. Corruption and nepotism may be just as much as a symptom of the weakness of the central government as its cause. Even in the times of greatest stability, Afghanistan has been governed from the center via a loose consensus among powerful regional and ethnic leaderships. Karzai might, in fact, have been governing the way a leader without a major national political base of his own deems it necessary to survive in a post-U.S. Afghanistan. And putting his government under stronger Western tutelage risks further undermining his legitimacy in the eyes of many of his own people.**

## CON - 10) The timeline gives the Taliban leverage

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

**Some critics suggest that by announcing July 2011 as the target date to begin a troop drawdown, President Obama has encouraged the Taliban to simply wait out the Americans.** Supporters counter that by declaring that the U.S. commitment is finite, the President is forcing Karzai and the Pakistanis to take more responsibility for fighting the Taliban. **That debate may be missing the point: everyone in the region is already acting on the assumption that the U.S. presence is temporary, knowing that America can't sustain a permanent occupation. One reason Karzai has made common cause with some notorious thugs is that he feels the need to have some muscle behind him when the U.S. goes. The Pakistanis, for their part, want to ensure that the U.S. leaves on the basis of a deal with the Taliban that replaces the present government, which is too close to India for Islamabad's comfort. And the Taliban — like any indigenous insurgency confronting a foreign military — knows that time is on its side.**

## **CON - 11) Pakistan won't support the US**

**TIME, 2009** [Five Flawed Assumptions of Obama's Afghan Surge, Dec 6, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1945869,00.html?iid=tsmodule>]

**The Obama Administration has stressed that its Afghan plan can't work unless Pakistan shuts down Taliban safe havens on its side of the border. But Pakistan has declined to do so, because its key decision makers — the military leadership — don't share the U.S. view of the conflict in Afghanistan. Months of cajoling and exhortation by U.S. officials have failed to shake the Pakistani view that the country's prime security challenge is its lifelong conflict with India rather than the threat of Taliban extremism, and the Pakistani military sees the Karzai government as being under Indian sway. As a result, Pakistan's large-scale military offensives against the Taliban have been confined to those who challenge the authority of the Pakistani state; those who use Pakistan as a base from which to launch attacks in Afghanistan have been largely unmolested.**

## **CON - 12) The troop surge emboldens the Taliban and is against our national security interests**

**Talking Points Memo, 2009** [Feingold: Afghanistan Strategy 'Doesn't Make Any Sense To Me', Dec 6, <http://tpmlivewire.talkingpointsmemo.com/2009/12/feingold-afghanistan-strategy-doesnt-make-any-sense-to-me.php>]

**If anything, Feingold said, the escalation of the Afghanistan war will further embolden the Taliban and push the Afghan population to embrace America's enemies.**

**"This boots-on-the-ground approach alienates the Afghan population and specifically encourages the Taliban to further coalesce with Al Qaida, which is the complete opposite of our national security interest," Feingold said.**

### CON - 13) Obama's surge isn't big enough

**Blankley**, executive vice president of Edelman public relations in Washington, **2009** [Tony, Too Few Troops, Too Much Spin, Human Events, Dec 9, <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=34755>]

**According to CNN, at the height of the Iraq surge, there were 29 troops for every 1,000 residents. Currently, there are** about 260,000 U.S., NATO and Afghan troops on the ground, **about 11 troops per 1,000 residents. With the additional 30,000 U.S. troops plus 5,000 more NATO troops, the force density rate will go up to 12.5 troops for every 1,000 residents -- barely half of what is needed to reasonably hope for success. Moreover, the history of COINs -- from the Philippines to Algeria to Malaya to Vietnam -- is that they will take many years to succeed, if then.**

**Notwithstanding that guidance, Gen. McChrystal asked for only 40,000 more troops because, obviously, we do not have another 340,000 troops available. And given that the word from some of our troops in Afghanistan is that the Afghan National Army more or less refuses to fight, we are not going to find another 300,000 adequate fighting soldiers from the locals in the next year or two.**

### CON - 14) Al-Qaida can find other safe havens than Pakistan

**Blankley**, executive vice president of Edelman public relations in Washington, **2009** [Tony, Too Few Troops, Too Much Spin, Human Events, Dec 9, <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=34755>]

**Along with that critical strategic shortcoming of our new Afghanistan/Pakistan policy, critics of the president's escalation point out that al-Qaida easily can find safe haven in Yemen, as well as Somalia and other parts of the Horn of Africa.** (The jungles of South America and Central America could be added to that list, as could parts of the dense cities of Hamburg, London, Paris, Rotterdam and Falls Church, Va.) **But because we clearly don't have enough troops to gain control of those other areas, the administration and its Republican defenders largely ignore that gibe.**

## **CON - 15) Nation-building must be a goal to be successful in Afghanistan**

**Friedman**, NY Times Op-Ed columnist, **2009** [Thomas, May It All Come True, NY Times, Dec 5, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/opinion/06friedman.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>]

**But here is what worries me: The president's spokesman, Robert Gibbs, said flatly: "This can't be nation-building." And the president told a columnists' lunch on Tuesday that he wants to avoid "mission creep" that takes on "nation-building in Afghanistan."**

**I am sorry: This is only nation-building. You can't train an Afghan Army and police force to replace our troops if you have no basic state they feel is worth fighting for. But that will require a transformation by Karzai, starting with the dismissal of his most corrupt aides and installing officials Afghans can trust.**

## **CON - 16) Obama is fighting an unwinnable war**

**Robinson**, Washington Post op-ed columnist, **2009** [Eugene, Down the wrong path in Afghanistan, Dec 4, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/03/AR2009120303606.html?nav=rss\\_opinion/columns](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/03/AR2009120303606.html?nav=rss_opinion/columns)]

**Look at what's necessary for the surge in Afghanistan to succeed. President Hamid Karzai has to forswear corruption -- which will require more than a stern lecture from Obama. The Afghan military not only has to be trained to fight but also must expand from its current strength of 92,000 soldiers to as many as 260,000 -- a level that Karzai's weak, cash-strapped government can scarcely afford. And a nation known as the "graveyard of empires" for its legendary resistance to foreign occupation would have to experience a sudden change of heart.**

**In the end -- even if conditions in July 2011 are such that Obama can order a real withdrawal, not a token one -- the larger threat of terrorism will remain. The "drain the swamp" approach to fighting terrorism doesn't work if the virulence can simply infect the next swamp, and the next.**

**It never made sense to think of the fight against terrorism as a "war" because it's not possible to defeat a technique or an idea by force of arms. George W. Bush chose a path toward a more or less permanent state of costly, deadly, low-level war. Barack Obama should have taken a different course.**

## CON - 17) Afghanistan is another Vietnam

**The New Republic, 2009** [Sorry, but I Hear Echoes of Vietnam, Dec 1, <http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-plank/sorry-i-hear-echoes-vietnam>]

**What bothers me is the echo of Vietnam in 1964 and 1965.** Of course, there are differences--and Obama tried to cite them in his speech--but the similarities are disturbing:

-- **Obama says that in Afghanistan, in contrast to Vietnam, we are not “facing a broad-based popular insurgency.” But if you look at South Vietnam in the early ‘60s, the National Liberation Front, or Viet Cong, did not have broad support. What it had was funding and organization and an ability to build support against what became a foreign invader. It seems that in the Pashtun South of Afghanistan, the Taliban is very similarly positioned.**

-- **In Vietnam, we were hampered by the lack of a government that enjoyed widespread support.** In the absence of a popular government that could speak on behalf of the people, our intervention quickly degenerated into neo-colonialism, where the U.S. became, in effect, the government and the adversary of the insurgency. **The same thing seems to be happening in Afghanistan. The government has, if anything, lost legitimacy as a result of the recent elections, and the current Afghan armed forces are probably inferior to those of South Vietnam in the mid-‘60s.**

-- **Obama says that in contrast with Vietnam, the U.S. is “joined by a broad coalition of 43 nations that recognizes the legitimacy of our action.” Again, a misleading comparison. During the Vietnam war, the U.S. called the shots but it enjoyed very active military support from other countries in the Pacific region,** including Australia, South Korea, Thailand, and New Zealand. South Korea lost thousands of soldiers in the war. **I don’t know if there were 43 countries who recognized “the legitimacy of our action,” but I would suspect there may have been. That wasn’t the problem. The problem was that U.S. was pretty much on its own militarily in an Asian country that had long suffered from Western, and then Japanese, colonialism. Its intervention could be cast as a continuation of Western colonialism.**

## **CON - 18) Obama's strategy will fail in Afghanistan**

**The New Republic, 2009** [Sorry, but I Hear Echoes of Vietnam, Dec 1,  
<http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-plank/sorry-i-hear-echoes-vietnam>]

**Breaking momentum is consistent with a strategy aimed at achieving a stalemate and securing an agreement through negotiations that would at the least prevent the return of al Qaeda. But if the Afghan people don't acquire a government capable of conducting negotiations with the Taliban, then Obama is going to have trouble keeping his promise to begin withdrawing American forces in 2011.**

If the U.S. has not been able by then to encourage the creation of a popular government in Kabul, then **Obama will be faced with the same kind of choice that Richard Nixon faced in 1973. He can agree to withdraw on the promise of peace and reconciliation, while recognizing that as soon as the last American leaves Afghanistan, the Taliban will begin taking over from the weak pro-American government. Or he can go back to the American people and request more troops and more time. And good luck with that.**

**In other words, I don't see the end game in Obama's strategy. As it stands, it looks like a choice between remaining in Afghanistan indefinitely and perhaps escalating again or withdrawing and accepting the failure to achieve our objective. I hope things don't come to that, but I fear they will.**

## **CON - 19) The presence of US troops in Afghanistan inflames ethnic differences**

**Zachary**, professor of journalism at Stanford University, **2009** [G. Pascal, The Case For An Immediate Withdrawal From Afghanistan, Oct 12, In These Times, <http://towardfreedom.com/home/content/view/1717/106/>]

### **Yet the very presence of American troops inflames ethnic differences.**

**Afghans view Americans as invaders and occupiers, and their very presence galvanizes opponents, creating more resistance.** As **Afghan army spokesman** Zahir Azimi **has said, “Where [American] forces are fighting, people think it is incumbent on them to resist the occupiers and infidels.”** **The self-perpetuating nature of the conflict explains the profound pessimism expressed by some with deep experience in the region.** British Gen. David Richards, who served in Afghanistan, said in August that stabilizing the country could take 40 years. While such predictions are dismissed as hysterical, they are simply the logical extension of Levin’s insistence that the United States “increase and accelerate our efforts to support the Afghan security forces in their efforts to become self-sufficient in delivering security to their nation.” These **efforts at self-reliance inevitably involve a significant American presence on the ground, which in turn fuels the very cycle that Levin insists he wants to avoid: a costly quagmire.**

## **CON - 20) Immediate withdrawal would not lead to terrorists following us home**

**Hornberger**, founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation, **2009**  
[Jacob, Immediately Withdraw from Afghanistan Too, Feb 9,  
<http://www.fff.org/blog/jghblog2009-02-09.asp>]

**“But the terrorists will follow us home!” the neocons cry. Let’s carefully examine that nonsensical bromide.**

**First, it operates on the assumption that U.S. troops are a magnet and that the terrorists are iron filings. Not so. The terrorists are human beings with the power of exercising choices. If they want to disengage from battles with U.S. troops in Afghanistan and come to the United States to commit terrorist acts, they are fully capable of doing so.** The presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan does not prevent the terrorists from making such a choice.

**Second, let’s assume that the terrorists decided to “follow us home.” How exactly would they do that? By loading onto terrorist transport ships and terrorist transport planes and following the U.S. transport planes and ships to the United States? That’s ridiculous. The terrorists don’t have transport ships and planes.**

The worst that could happen is, say, a couple hundred terrorists making their way into the United States. Sure, they could blow up some buildings but the possibility that there could be a conquest of the United States, with the terrorists taking over the presidency, the Congress, the courts, the IRS, and all the state governments, and overcoming all those millions of Americans who have been buying all those guns and ammo is nonexistent. Again, however, those 200 or so terrorists could come here anyway despite the presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

**Third, by exiting the country, the U.S. military will no longer be dropping bombs on Afghan wedding parties and others, which would immediately reduce the incentive for new recruits to join the terrorists. The reason that the ranks of the terrorists are larger than they were seven years ago is because the U.S. military has killed lots of people who had nothing to do with the terrorists,** especially all those people in the wedding parties that have been bombed. That sort of thing tends to make people angry and vengeful. While it’s true that the terrorists could still come to the United States and conduct terrorist attacks after a U.S. withdrawal, at least the ranks of the terrorists will no longer be continuously swelled by the bombing of Afghan wedding parties and others unconnected to the terrorists.

## **CON - 21) Immediate withdrawal would allow us to focus on issues at home and would boost the economy**

**Hornberger**, founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation, **2009**  
[Jacob, Immediately Withdraw from Afghanistan Too, Feb 9,  
<http://www.fff.org/blog/jghblog2009-02-09.asp>]

**An immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan would limit the U.S. government to dealing with the threat of terrorism here at home and would put a stop to what it has been doing to perpetually fuel the threat of terrorism** — e.g., dropping bombs on wedding parties and others unconnected to terrorism in Afghanistan.

Finally, **the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan** (and Iraq) **would have the additional bonus of strengthening the U.S. economy by immediately reducing federal borrowing and expenditures by hundreds of billions of dollars. Given that out-of-control federal spending is threatening our nation with bankruptcy and ruin, a major reduction in federal spending would be a good thing.**

## **CON - 22) The Afghan government is incompetent and corrupt**

**Koch**, former mayor of New York City, **2009**, [Ed, Mr. President, Bring the Troops Home, Washington Post, Nov 18,  
[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/11/18/mr\\_president\\_bring\\_the\\_troops\\_home\\_99196.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/11/18/mr_president_bring_the_troops_home_99196.html)]

As of October 15, a plurality of Americans oppose the Afghanistan war, and for good reason. **In Afghanistan, we are propping up a corrupt administration where everything is for sale, and the government is mired in the drug trade.**

**Furthermore, the Karzai government is incompetent. Despite years of training by U.S. forces, the Karzai regime's army has no control over the country. The Taliban currently controls much of Afghanistan, with President Karzai's authority existing primarily in the capital of Kabul. Apparently the Karzai government, with the support of the U.S., is seeking to negotiate with the so-called "moderate" Taliban supporters and possibly bring them into the government.**

## **CON - 23) Obama will not withdraw troops in July 2011**

**Chapman**, Columnist at the Chicago Tribune, **2009** [Steve, A Losing Bet in Afghanistan, Dec 13, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/13/a\\_losing\\_bet\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_99535.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/13/a_losing_bet_in_afghanistan_99535.html)]

But **the administration is firmer on the escalation than it is on the exit. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that come July 2011, only "some small number" of U.S. troops will be brought home. "I don't consider this an exit strategy,"** he emphasized.

McChrystal takes the commander-in-chief's timetable even less seriously. **"I don't believe the July 2011 time frame, militarily, is a major factor in my strategy,"** he said.

**Obama's dual-pronged plan is not crazy in principle, but it looks to be short one prong. When he says we'll escalate now and draw down later, we can believe the first part. Betting on a substantial withdrawal in 2011 is like betting that Tiger Woods will become monogamous. Nothing is impossible, but...**

## **CON - 24) The Afghan people don't like US troops**

**Chapman**, Columnist at the Chicago Tribune, **2009** [Steve, A Losing Bet in Afghanistan, Dec 13,  
[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/13/a\\_losing\\_bet\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_99535.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/13/a_losing_bet_in_afghanistan_99535.html)]

**There are more reasons to think the strategy will fail than to believe it will work. The first is that you never get a second chance to make a good first impression. American forces arrived in Afghanistan with the advantage of not being the Taliban** -- whose oppressive policies had alienated the populace. **But today, the locals associate us with eight years of disappointment.**

**It's not easy for a culturally alien outside power to win the support of a people with a long history of resistance to foreign invaders. It's even harder to win that support after we've spent the better part of a decade proving we don't deserve it.**

**More U.S. troops are supposed to enhance security for ordinary Afghans,** as well as facilitating civilian improvements that will win their allegiance. **But more U.S. troops also mean more deaths for innocent Afghan bystanders, not to mention a greater daily irritant to nationalist sensibilities.**

**The people we aim to help, keep in mind, have no powerful reasons to like or trust us.** A lot of Americans feel a visceral aversion to our national government -- regarding it as incompetent, dishonest and overly powerful. So imagine how it looks to Afghans who see our soldiers in their streets. It's no great asset that our chief ally is a regime that had to rig elections to stay in office.

## **CON - 25) Ground war in Afghanistan is unwinnable**

**Koch**, former mayor of New York City, **2009**, [Ed, The President's Decision on Troops in Afghanistan is Wrong. Bring Them Home, Dec 9, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/09/the\\_presidents\\_decision\\_on\\_troops\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_is\\_wrong\\_\\_bring\\_them\\_home\\_99473.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/09/the_presidents_decision_on_troops_in_afghanistan_is_wrong__bring_them_home_99473.html)]

**I believe the land war in Afghanistan is unwinnable. Indeed, if we by any definition were to win in Afghanistan, it would be a pyrrhic victory, since Afghanistan really does not matter anymore. The real threat is nuclear-armed Pakistan, where the Taliban and Al Qaeda are seeking dominance and already operate in the tribal areas and cross the border with impunity. I don't believe that the Pakistani army will ever root out the Taliban and Al Qaeda, which are perceived as allies against India, the enemy with which Pakistan has already fought three wars.**

## **CON - 26) Drone attacks into Pakistan won't last**

**Koch**, former mayor of New York City, **2009**, [Ed, The President's Decision on Troops in Afghanistan is Wrong. Bring Them Home, Dec 9, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/09/the\\_presidents\\_decision\\_on\\_troops\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_is\\_wrong\\_\\_bring\\_them\\_home\\_99473.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/09/the_presidents_decision_on_troops_in_afghanistan_is_wrong__bring_them_home_99473.html)]

Scott Shane of The New York Times in an article on December 6th, discusses the quandary of American soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. He wrote, **"The Taliban can plan an attack from Pakistan and execute it in Afghanistan. Their fighters - or Al Qaeda's leaders - can slip across the border to flee, or to rejoin the battle. At the same time, the Americans can fight openly only in Afghanistan, not in Pakistan, and the Taliban know it."** How do we deal with that?

**The Obama administration expects to increase our attacks in Pakistan, particularly with drones.** The New York Times article continues, "That has been changing all year, however, and it is about to change even more, **as the Americans gear up for an intensified war on both sides of the line simultaneously. The dispatch of 30,000 additional Americans to the Afghan side of the border will occur simultaneously with more intensive missile strikes from drone aircraft and Pakistani army offensives on the other side.**"

**I predict that this coordinated strategy will not last long. When the Pakistani media begin to campaign that we are killing large numbers of innocent civilians, the weak Pakistani government will denounce the attacks by the U.S. calling for an end to the bombings and killings of alleged innocent civilians.**

## **CON - 27) Immediate withdrawal is the only option**

**Rep. Chaffetz, R-Utah, 2009** [Jason, Better to withdraw than make a compromised effort, Washington Examiner, Dec 8, <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columns/OpEd-Contributor/Better-to-withdraw-than-make-a-compromised-effort-8637815-78715367.html>]

**We can win any war but only with the president's full commitment to the mission. Absent such a commitment, our presence in Afghanistan does nothing more than endanger our troops, compromise our readiness, and waste our money.**

**If our mission in Afghanistan is simply to protect the populace and build the nation, then I believe the time has come to bring our troops home. We have successfully rooted out al Qaeda from Afghanistan. Fewer than 100 al Qaeda operatives are operating in Afghanistan** according to retired Marine Gen. James L. Jones' assessment of the situation.

**We will still have to fight al Qaeda around the globe. So let's bring home the tens of thousands who have fought so valiantly to protect America.**

## **CON - 28) Afghanistan is not a centerpiece of a syndicate of terrorism**

**Will**, columnist for the Washington Post, **2009** [George, This Will Not End Well, Dec 2, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/02/this\\_will\\_not\\_end\\_well\\_99369.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/12/02/this_will_not_end_well_99369.html)]

**In a spate of mid-November interviews** -- while participating in the president's protracted rethinking of policy -- **Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described America's Afghanistan goal(s)** somewhat differently. **They are "to defeat al-Qaeda and its extremist allies" because "al-Qaeda and the other extremists are part of a syndicate of terror, with al-Qaeda still being an inspiration, a funder, a trainer, an equipper and director of a lot of what goes on."** And: "We want to do everything we can to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda." And: "We want to get the people who attacked us." And: "We want to get al-Qaeda." And: "We are in Afghanistan because we cannot permit the return of a staging platform for terrorists."

**But al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan do not number in the tens of thousands, or even thousands. Or perhaps even hundreds. Although "the people who attacked us" were al-Qaeda, the threat that justifies today's escalation is, Clinton says, a "syndicate of terror" of which al-Qaeda is just an important part. But is Afghanistan central to the syndicate?**

## **CON - 29) Obama's plan will destabilize Pakistan**

**Reuters, 2009** [Pakistan fears it may pay price of U.S. Afghan surge, Dec 3, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5B21H320091203>]

**President Barack Obama's troop surge in Afghanistan has sparked fears in Pakistan it will lead to more U.S. drone attacks and military involvement in its border areas, possibly further destabilizing Washington's ally.**

**Many Pakistan analysts and security officials fear an emboldened Afghan Taliban could then capitalize on Obama's plans to start withdrawing troops in 18 months by waiting it out in Pakistan, which already faces militants on its own soil.**

The Pakistan government has cautiously welcomed Obama's plans to send another 30,000 troops to battle a strengthening Taliban insurgency. But it came with a caveat -- Islamabad warned Washington on Wednesday of the need to avoid "adverse fallout."

**The concern for many is that when extra U.S. troops land in south Afghanistan the Taliban will just make a tactical retreat across the porous border to Pakistan's lawless tribal regions.**

**That would up the stakes in Pakistan where its army has launched an offensive in the border region of South Waziristan. The campaign has already sparked a backlash of suicide attacks in cities, raising fears for the country's stability.**

## **CON - 30) Drone attacks hurt Pakistani stability**

**Reuters, 2009** [Pakistan fears it may pay price of U.S. Afghan surge, Dec 3, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5B21H320091203>]

**There are signs of U.S. frustration even before the surge is implemented. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said this week that Pakistan had to do more against militants.**

**But in a country where anti-American sentiment runs deep, increasing drone attacks is a risky tactic that could spark further popular opposition to U.S. involvement in Pakistan just as unpopular President Asif Ali Zardari faces calls to quit.**

**Pakistan officially objects to the U.S. drone strikes, saying they violate its sovereignty and run the risk of bolstering militancy because of civilian casualties.**

**U.S. officials say missile strikes are carried out under an agreement with Islamabad that allows Pakistani leaders to decry the a**