To: National Security Advisor James Jones  
From: 40768319  
Re: Afghanistan Engagement Strategy

**Issue:** Afghanistan engagement strategy requires progress assessment to inform strategy moves forward and ensure national interest and operational objective alignment.

**Identification of Relevant National Interests:** The nine-year war in Afghanistan involves a host of national interests that have not been clearly delineated from the fluxing operational objectives of the war.

*Vital Interests*
- Prevent use of WMD against United States and its military abroad
- Ensure active cooperation of US allies in shaping international system
- Maintain leverage in relations with potential strategic adversaries, China and Russia

*Extremely Important Interests*
- Suppress terrorism

*Important Interests*
- Promote democracy

**Operational Objectives:**
- Ensure the security of Pakistan’s arsenal of roughly 100 nuclear weapons
- Maintain legitimacy of NATO alliance through structured coalition withdrawal strategy
- Deny Al Qaeda sufficient safe-haven from which to launch attacks against the United States
- Provide Afghan national military and police with skills necessary to continue stability efforts following US withdrawal

**Discussion Background:** Disappointing results in the Marja campaign and delay of the Kandahar campaign demonstrate a lack of strategic progress following the surge. Lack of progress indicates a need to redefine objectives and realign strategy with vital national interests.

A stable Afghanistan is not in and of itself a vital interest of the US. Such an end state is desirable objective only insofar as it promotes US interests as outlined above at reasonable costs. It is unclear that a stable Afghanistan promotes American vital interests or will even result in the above immediate operational objectives given the complexities of the country.

Tribal history, the opium trade, rampant corruption, and an ungoverned Pakistan border region provide additional obstacles not present in Iraq that make central government control impractical. In addition, experience in Iraq demonstrated that stabilization efforts require an open ended commitment, large troop numbers and wide ranging support from the local population. Moreover, training and equipping of national police and military is an arduous and expensive process.
**Strategic Options:**

**Option 1: Conduct COIN through additional “surge” of 50,000 troops**

Pursue a full counterinsurgency strategy by meeting General McChrystal’s initial request for 80,000 additional troops without providing a withdrawal date. The current level of troops is inadequate for a COIN campaign. The withdrawal date of summer 2011 emboldens the Taliban and hinders COIN operations by creating a crisis of confidence in the population.

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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Large presence allows for more reliable regional intelligence</td>
<td>• Requires indefinite time commitment to encourage positive relationship among population</td>
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<td>• If successful, will provide stable governance in Afghanistan and reduce human rights violations in the long term</td>
<td>• Extremely expensive in both lives and money</td>
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<td>• Assumes US presence will improve political/media reaction in U.S.</td>
<td>• Not certain to succeed given Afghanistan’s tribal/provincial structure</td>
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**Option 2: Maintain current troop levels beyond summer 2011**

Continue level of effort in face of little or no progress in strategic progress. It is reasonably clear that no rapid progress will be made by summer 2011.

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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Significant presence allows for more reliable regional intelligence</td>
<td>• Continues same strategy that has been relatively ineffective</td>
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<td>• Provides more time to train Afghan nationals for stabilization efforts following US withdrawal</td>
<td>• Extends cost and commitment, straining American military with no viable exit strategy</td>
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**Option 3: Unilateral withdrawal beginning summer 2011 followed by sustained counter terrorism operations**

Begin significant troop withdrawal in summer 2011 regardless of progress with complete withdrawal of non-counter terrorist forces by summer 2012. Continue counter terrorism in Af/Pak border region to deny Al Qaeda haven. Remain engaged with Pakistan to ensure security of nuclear arsenal.

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<th>Pros</th>
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<td>• Preserves US assets for vital national interest concerns</td>
<td>✓ Likely will result in Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan - and then?</td>
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<td>• Allows for sufficient counter terrorism without massive resource commitment</td>
<td>• Reduced presence may result in less reliable regional intelligence</td>
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<td>• Likely to resonate with war-weary public</td>
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**Recommendation:** **Option 3: Unconditional withdrawal beginning summer 2011**

The strategic objective of a unified, stable Afghanistan is not achievable in a reasonable time frame or at a reasonable cost and is unnecessary for the protection of American vital interests.

Option 1 requires a massive expenditure in lives and money to pursue a goal that may not be attainable and is not vital to the interest of the US. Even if a stable central government were to
emerge, it would not be able to exercise authority over the Af/Pak border region as demonstrated by the failures of the Pakistani government to do so within its own territory. Therefore, a successful COIN campaign would likely not reduce the terrorist threat from Al Qaeda as the organization would continue to operate in the Af/Pak mountains and other states such as Somalia and Yemen.

Option 2 pursues the same strategic objective but at a level of dedication unlikely to result in any meaningful success, albeit at a significantly reduced cost in comparison to Option 1.

Option 3 will likely result in a takeover of significant portions of Afghanistan by the Taliban but this result is inevitable without the dedication of massive amounts of resources to an operational objective that is not in line with vital American national interests.

**Implementation:**

*Devote majority of resources in region to ensuring security of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal.*
Ensuring the security of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons is the most important operational objective concerning US engagement in the Afghanistan conflict. Joint intelligence and counter terrorism efforts with the Pakistan government should receive the majority of US resources in the region to ensure the security of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal in order to prevent Al Qaeda or the Pakistani Taliban from obtaining a WMD.

*Coordinate a unified NATO coalition withdrawal.*
While NATO legitimacy has already been damaged by the lackluster nine year effort in Afghanistan, a coordinated and unified withdrawal could still signal the unity of the alliance. It is vital that the US maintain strong alliances in the face of a rising China and resurgent Russia. In addition, a unified withdrawal would allow for the preservation of NATO assets in the event of future confrontation with a strategic adversary.

*Continue counter terrorism efforts in Af/Pak border region.*
The US should enact Mr. Biden’s initially recommendation of maintaining minimal forces in Afghanistan for counter terrorism purposes. Counter terrorism should be carried out by the CIA and special forces that have successfully reduced the ability of Al Qaeda to operate as reported by Director Panetta. The failed and failing states throughout the developing world provide Al Qaeda with several venues from which to plan terrorist attacks against the US. Nation building in Afghanistan does not significantly reduce this threat and serves to distract national security assets from worldwide counter terrorism efforts.

*Encourage reconciliation and reintegration of Taliban in Afghanistan throughout withdrawal.*
Any progress in Afghanistan between now and summer 2011 should be used as leverage to encourage the reintegration of more moderate Taliban factions throughout the drawdown year from summer 2011 to summer 2012. A lack of progress by summer 2011, while disconcerting, only proves that the current operational objective of defeating the Taliban is not feasible at a justifiable cost.

→ Sell to public? Media reaction? Taliban/AQ narrative?
TO: NSA GEN (RET) James L. Jones  
FR: #408111760  
RE: Strategic Assessment of U.S. Policy in Afghanistan (Case #1)

Issue:
This strategic options memo assesses the current U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and provides options and a recommendation for the American strategy going forward. Our policy decisions will have short-term and long-term implications as we set the rules in 2011 post-Afghanistan, which include a reduced U.S. military presence, but an increased U.S. effort on counterterrorism.

U.S. National Interests:
Vital
- Prevent al-Qaeda and other extremist groups from obtaining and using nuclear weapons
- Deny Afghanistan/Pakistan safe havens for al-Qaeda to conduct terrorist attacks against U.S.
- Dismantle, disrupt, and defeat al-Qaeda associated movements (AQAM) and the Taliban

Extremely Important
- Enable stable and secure democratic government in Afghanistan partnered with the U.S.
- Develop capabilities of the Afghan armed forces, security forces, and law enforcement

Important
- Curb Pakistani and Iranian influence campaigns and material support to Afghan extremists
- Prevent use of nuclear weapons in South Asia by moderating India-Pakistan conflicts

Enemy ‘National Interests’ of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan/Pakistan:
Vital
- Through attrition or through force, break the will and expel U.S. from Afghanistan/Pakistan
- Al-Qaeda use of safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan to plan, obtain, and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD), particularly nuclear weapons, against the U.S. and its allies

Extremely Important
- Undermine or overthrow all secular and apostate regimes in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Protect senior al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership and technical experts to ensure longevity

Important
- Use Afghanistan/Pakistan as safe havens and centerpiece for establishing a Muslim Caliphate
- Use Afghanistan/Pakistan as safe havens to plan terrorist attacks on U.S. and enemy abroad

U.S. Operational Objectives:
- Undermine al-Qaeda’s efforts in Afghanistan/Pakistan to plan and obtain nuclear weapons
- Disrupt/Dismantle enemy efforts in Afghanistan/Pakistan to plan worldwide terrorist attacks
- Disrupt/Dismantle enemy efforts in Afghanistan/Pakistan to conduct insurgent attacks
- Capture key al-Qaeda and Talibak leadership and technical experts (WMD and IED experts)
- Use host-nation capacity building and training to stabilize Afghan democracy and institutions
- Use foreign internal defense advisers and trainers to dramatically improve the capabilities of the Afghan armed forces, security forces, and law enforcement enabling self-sufficiency

Discussion/Background: Key questions: (1) Is the Afghan “surge” strategy working or does the strategy and objectives need refining? Iraq lessons? (2) Does it make sense to go back to...
Vice President Biden’s position during the 2009 Afghan review – to keep a minimal force in Afghanistan, and simply run special operations raids over the border into al-Qaeda strongholds?

The U.S. has implemented a time-limited “troop surge” and now has over 100,000 American troops in Afghanistan supporting U.S. interests by implementing a classic counterinsurgency strategy. The Dutch, Australians, and Canadians have all publicized that their forces will be departing Afghanistan, and the U.S. military commitment is not open-ended, as troops-levels will be decreased in summer (July) 2011 contingent on the ground situation, with Afghan forces taking the lead region by region. As conventional troop levels increase, insurgent attacks significantly escalated, and although the war is nine years old, American casualties just hit their highest monthly level in July 2010. The surge is having some limited successes showing that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) can clear Taliban-dominated areas, but ISAF is having less success holding and controlling those same areas, such as in Marja. A true test of the success of the surge will be ISAF’s primary mission to take control of Kandahar, the Taliban spiritual heartland, but this mission keeps being delayed. While the surge has resulted in the retaking of some areas, particularly in the east, the Taliban has shown newfound strength in the north and resilience in the south, and is improving the complexity of its attacks. Afghanistan and Iraq are completely separate and unique efforts with more differences than similarities, and although the surge and COIN worked in Iraq, successes in Afghanistan are thus far very limited.

**Option #1: Counterterrorism (CT) strategy**

The U.S. pursues its national interests in Afghanistan through the current “troop surge” strategy until July 2011, but will then draw down a significant portion of its conventional forces. The U.S. will then take the opportunity to continue to pursue its vital national interests even more effectively, by initiating Vice President Biden’s CT strategy. The U.S. will decrease its conventional force presence and prioritize efforts on using special operations forces (SOF) and intelligence community (IC) forces to dismantle, disrupt, and defeat al-Qaeda nuclear intentions, and its ability to conduct worldwide terrorist activity from its Afghanistan/Pakistan safe havens.

The Director C.I.A. reportedly believes that there are less than 100 members of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, so SOF and IC efforts can be refocused to remove the remaining vestiges of al-Qaeda from Afghanistan, while simultaneously stepping up “stand-off” attacks of al-Qaeda and its allies in Pakistan, removing their safe havens. SOF will increase foreign internal defense capacity building to focus training elite units of the Afghan security and armed forces. This elite host-nation capacity building will enable Afghan self-sufficiency; develop institutions to protect the nascent Afghan democratic government; and enable more effective U.S.-Afghan raids against enemy targets to sever insurgent, WMD, and terrorist capabilities. Efforts will also focus curbing suspected Iranian and Pakistani deleterious influence and support to insurgents. Refocusing the mission on the top U.S. vital interests of CT, WMD, and advising, allows for a large reduction in U.S. forces, while being able to keep pressure on al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Pros:

- The President keeps to his pledge to reduce troop-levels in Afghanistan by summer 2011
- The U.S. will not have to redefine objectives with this option as small, agile, and elite SOF and IC forces are tailored to focus on vital interests of CT, WMD, and host-nation advising
- CT effort is “right-sized” as you don’t need 100,000 forces to hunt 100 al-Qaeda members
Cons:
- Troop-level reduction may appear to Afghans that the U.S. is abandoning Afghanistan again.
- Troop reduction may embolden Taliban to step up efforts of retaking Afghan territory.
- Stand-off attacks against Pakistani al-Qaeda are unpopular for America’s image in a shaky Pakistani democracy and often lead to being unable to interrogate targets that were attacked.

**Option #2: Counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy maintaining surge-level forces**
The U.S. continues to pursue its national interests in Afghanistan by prolonging the current “troop surge” and COIN strategy past summer 2011, until conditions on the ground determine the appropriate time for a troop reduction. COIN, training, and CT will all be strongly worked.

**Pros:**
- COIN will combat Taliban resurgence both militarily and through information operations.
- Training improves capacity of Afghan government, military, and police, integrating U.S. forces in echelons of Afghan services, and conducting more U.S.-Afghan coalition missions.

**Cons:**
- The President reneges on his pledge to reduce troop-levels in Afghanistan by summer 2011.
- U.S. troop casualties will increase due to increased enemy contact with AQAM and Taliban.
- Requires redefining objectives as COIN involves forces conducting nation-building and large conventional forces to implement COIN tactics, and large forces are not well suited for CT.
- Large troop levels and COIN distract from the primary vital U.S. interests of CT and WMD.

**Option #3: Decrease U.S. Forces, but U.S. trains the Afghan military and law enforcement**
The U.S. pursues its national interests in Afghanistan through the current “troop surge” strategy until July 2011, but as planned will follow the Iraq model of drawing down a significant portion of its forces, from currently over 100,000 to under 50,000 U.S. conventional forces in summer 2011 that will focus on the stability and training of the Afghan military and law enforcement.

**Pros:**
- The President keeps to his pledge to reduce troop-levels in Afghanistan by summer 2011.
- Advising improves morale and capability of Afghan military and law enforcement, by extending their training education and conducting more side-by-side U.S.-Afghan missions.

**Cons:**
- Lack of specialized forces to implement U.S. objectives of countering AQAM WMD and CT.

**Recommendation:**
Option #1 has the best chance for sustainability and achieving short-term/long-term objectives.

**Implementation & Fallback:**
Re-balance our ends and means. For the next ten months follow the December 2009 strategy conducting COIN missions and offensives against Kandahar and other Taliban strongholds, and begin conventional U.S. force reduction in summer 2011. Concurrently increase size and capability of our special operations units, building up a small, but well resourced inter-agency SOF and IC presence. In summer 2011, implement the SOF/IC refocusing of the mission on the U.S. vital interests of CT, WMD, and host-nation capacity building, to dismantle, disrupt, and defeat AQAM and the Taliban in Afghanistan/Pakistan and reverse Iran and Pakistan’s insurgent support. This U.S. hard power should be balanced with soft power initiatives diplomatically moderating India-Pakistan and Iran, while supporting regional democratic government stability.
Situation:
With General Petraeus and the last of the “surge” troops having arrived in Afghanistan, there are worrying signs that the situation is not improving as hoped, impairing the ability of the U.S. to meet the President’s timeline to begin withdrawing troops in July 2011, and prompting a December strategy review.

Interests:
Vital:
- Ensuring the safety and control of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal
- Preventing al Qaeda from finding another safe-haven from which to launch an attack
Extremely important:
- Maintaining adequate reserves of U.S. forces to respond to other threats around the globe
- Conducting a responsible withdrawal from Iraq
Important:
- Establishing a stable Afghan government providing basic security and human rights
- Maintaining the United States’ credibility among its allies and foes
- Marginalizing the expansion of Chinese influence, particularly mineral extraction, in the area

Objectives:
- Prevent the establishment of terrorist training camps in Afghanistan or Pakistan
- Establish a stable, democratic government in Afghanistan that can maintain its own security
- Marginalize the influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Reduce the burden on U.S. troops and resources

Discussion/Background:
Is the “surge” strategy working? Does it need to be refined? The surge in Afghanistan is only in its ninth month with the last surge unit just arriving in country. So far, results have been as predicted by General Petraeus, though not as positive as others anticipated:
- ISAF forces are controlling more ground with their Afghan counterparts
- Casualties are up with increased enemy engagement (consistent with experience in Iraq)
- Security has shown slow signs of improvement in areas with increased forces
- More ISAF troops are dedicated to mentor and train ANA and ANP units, and partnership between ISAF and Afghan troops has increased across the board

However, by other measures, the surge has shown some worrying signs:
- Although outward Taliban attacks have been reduced in most areas with increased ISAF troop strength, the enemy’s campaign of intimidation has maintained a grip of fear on the populace in several key areas, including Marjah and Kandahar, the objects of our primary offensive
- Taliban presence and attacks have increased dramatically in areas to the north where enemy presence was minimal until the troop surge
- A successful model for tribal engagement, replicable nationwide—a hallmark of the surge in Iraq—has yet to emerge; real concerns that using tribal forces will mark a return to warlordism
- Corruption at all levels of government continues to undermine progress and credibility, and President Karzai and his subordinates have shown little commitment to addressing it
Does the United States have to redefine its objectives in Afghanistan for a second or third time?
The timeline the President presented for beginning the withdrawal of troops in 2011 is inconsistent
with the stated goals of his strategy and the subordinate timelines, such as the training and
equipping of Afghan forces, upon which it depends. Reverting to a counter-terror strategy,

What lessons from the Iraq withdrawal are applicable to Afghanistan?
The withdrawal from Iraq was conducted as a handoff from Coalition to Iraqi units, with
appropriate time for successful turnover of knowledge, supplies, and capabilities. A deliberate plan
for phasing out units in an area that slowly reduced CF presence provided for steadily increasing
levels of Iraqi control. These elements of transition were essential to maintaining established levels
of security as CF troop levels were reduced. A rise in dramatic attacks has been effective not as a
military effort but as a political/propaganda effort to highlight the inability of Iraq to control its own
security and the apparent failure of the U.S. to ensure lasting stability. Care must be taken in
Afghanistan to conduct withdrawals based on both the military and the political situation on the
ground.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are inextricably connected by the limited U.S. resources that must
be balanced between the conflicts and the domestic and allied political realities that tie actions in
one theatre to the other. While there is little doubt in the eyes of most Americans that Afghanistan
was a more important strategic priority in 2003 than Iraq, and that resources diverted to Iraq
impaired the fight in Afghanistan, it is critical to view the situation today outside a normative
assessment of past actions. In this view, the consequences of a failed Iraqi state—manifest in 2006
as Turkey conducted cross-border raids, Saudi Arabia showed signs of moving against Iran, and
Jordan and Syria were crushed by refugees—may be more significant than the failure of an Afghan
state, which has been a failure for much of the past century. Our strategic interests in Pakistan are
unquestionably more vital than our interests in Afghanistan alone, given Pakistan’s nuclear weapons
and similar history of terrorist training camps, but what is not clear is that our continuing presence
in Afghanistan is either essential to maintaining influence in Pakistan, nor contributes positively to
Pakistan’s security. Thus, great care must be taken to not impair success in Iraq by diverting
resources too quickly back to Afghanistan. And a better assessment of options for addressing our
interests in Afghanistan, outside of continuing our present course in Afghanistan, must be explored.

Strategic Options:
Option 1: Reinforce the surge and extend it by six months past the 2011 date.
Give General Petraeus more time. Increase diplomatic and development resources to make up for
the loss of troops in 2012.
Pros:
- Conditions-based withdrawal forestalls the charge of retreating from the Taliban
- Makes meeting goals for military objectives in the south and training Afghan Security Forces
more realistically achievable before large-scale withdrawal
Cons:
- Risks reducing pressure on Afghan military and government officials to take charge
- May simply postpone the inevitable, at the cost of more lives and treasure

Option 2: Follow the current plan for a phased withdrawal beginning in 2011.
Pros:
- Meets the President’s promise and his demands for urgency of the Afghan leadership
- Emphasizes to the Afghan people that the U.S. presence is not a long-term occupation
- Maintains the support of key allies such as Britain and Canada by reinforcing that the U.S. commitment is not open-ended

Cons:
- Timeline is unrealistic given current progress and Afghan recruitment and training goals
- Lack of progress may force the President into option 1 by default
- Unclear that this will be sufficient to maintain a Pakistani alliance against the Taliban

**Option 3: Accelerate the withdrawal timeline and change the mission of U.S. forces from counter-insurgency to counter-terror.**

Pros:
- Reduces U.S. troop commitment and casualties, as well as budgetary expense
- Prioritizes the primary national security objective
- May serve to relieve pressure in Pakistan on the Taliban
- Targeted counter-terror attacks have shown great success in the past year

Cons:
- Will likely result in a devolving Afghan state with Taliban control of large areas
- Human rights standards will disintegrate under Taliban control; there is potential for the widespread slaughter of U.S. and Afghan government supporters
- U.S. credibility will be damaged as the abandonment of a full-scale counter-insurgency effort will be interpreted by al Qaeda and its supporters as a victory
- Unclear consequences to our relationship with Pakistan; may be seen as breaking another promise and forcing them back into supporting the Taliban

**Recommendation:**

**Option 3: Accelerate the withdrawal timeline and change the mission of U.S. forces from counter-insurgency to counter-terror.**

Although the short-term consequences of option 3 may be the worst, it is a more realistic, achievable, and cost-effective long-term mission. It maximizes the allocation of resources to our most vital strategic objectives, and frees up resources to pursue other pressing foreign and domestic priorities. Although U.S. credibility will be tinged, most allies have already chosen this course of action based on their own strategic analysis. The consequences with Pakistan are unclear and concerning, but may not be significantly worse than under the alternatives. Both alternatives have a high probability of eventually resulting in the same regional end-state, but only after the expense of many more American lives and taxpayer dollars.

**Implementation/Fallback:**

**Military/Operational:**
- The existing 2011 withdrawal date should be maintained, but the planned pace of withdrawals should be accelerated to reduce troops to 50% in one year, 25% of current levels in two years.
- The number of special forces units and their support elements should be increased.

**Domestic-International/Political:**
- The President should emphasize his adherence to his stated timeline and the narrow focus on our most vital strategic interests
- While emphasizing the overall reduction in the war effort, a prominent effort should be made to strongly support the remaining troops; reductions in casualties should be highlighted
Appendix:
- Are our operations in Pakistan dependent on our presence in Afghanistan, or are there alternative avenues of operational support?
- What will the Pakistani government's reaction be to a U.S. policy that concedes parts of Afghanistan to the Taliban?
The world is as it was on September 13, 2011, except for hypotheticals that are specifically introduced in this case. If there are material changes between now and September 20, when your strategic-options outline is due, you are not required to take those into account—though you may do so if you would like. You are an assistant to General Douglas Lute, deputy national security advisor for Afghanistan and Pakistan. He worked on Afghanistan and Iraq issues in the Bush administration and played a central role in conducting the Fall 2009 Afghanistan/Pakistan review.

A Mismatch of Interests and Policy?

After conducting a lengthy review of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan in the fall of 2009, President Obama determined that the U.S. had two vital interests in the Af/Pak theater. The first, as he explained in a speech at West Point, was to “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.” The second, which he alluded to, was to secure Pakistan’s arsenal of nuclear weapons from al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Islamist elements within the country’s national-security apparatus.

Lute calls you into his office one day and reminds you of the West Point speech, noting that when you think about it that way, it seems a little odd that we’re still spending so much time and money focused on Afghanistan, which has no nuclear weapons and now virtually no al Qaeda presence. He reminds you that Vice President Joseph Biden once said, “it is hard to imagine a greater nightmare for America than the world’s second-largest Muslim nation becoming a failed state in fundamentalists’ hands, with an arsenal of nuclear weapons and a population larger than Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea combined.”

Lute comments that Afghanistan is where al Qaeda was headquartered when plotting 9/11, and that wherever the U.S. has 100,000 troops fighting and taking casualties daily will be on the front page. But now al Qaeda is in Pakistan, and so is our biggest problem. He wonders what the world would look like if Faisal Shahzad had succeeded in his failed car bomb attempt in Times Square in May of 2010. The Administration believes Shahzad attended a training camp in Pakistan and received funding from al Qaeda affiliates.

Lute poses the question that then-National Security Advisor Jones asked the Pakistanis after the Times Square incident: if terrorists headquartered in Pakistan succeeded in carrying out a mass-casualty attack in the United States that killed thousands, what we would have to do in the tribal
areas of Pakistan in the next days and weeks? Let’s think ahead about that, he urged the Pakistanis, and do today what after an attack we would wish we had done months before. With this in mind, Lute asks you for a strategic options outline that gives your best analysis of the administration’s current Af/Pak policy and whether staying on this path maximizes the prospects for preventing another 9/11, or worse. In addition, he asks for two alternative strategic options.

Obama’s Af/Pak Policy

In his 2009 review, the President determined that the U.S. could not afford an “open-ended commitment” in Afghanistan or attempt to turn the country into a fully functional democracy. He rejected the suggestion of “nation building,” judging the price of such an effort—which his former budget chief estimated would be $1 trillion over ten years, about the same as the cost of providing health care to all Americans—to be too high. The President concluded that a temporary troop surge was necessary to achieve his more limited goals. In his West Point speech, Obama announced that an additional 30,000 U.S. troops would be deployed to Afghanistan by late Summer 2010, but that troop numbers would begin to decline—at a rate to be determined by conditions on the ground—in the summer of 2011. In June 2011, the President specified his withdrawal timetable: 10,000 troops would leave Afghanistan by the end of 2011, and a total of 33,000 troops would be withdrawn by the summer of 2012. “After this initial reduction,” he explained, “our troops will continue coming home at a steady pace as Afghan security forces move into the lead. Our mission will change from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security.”

In his West Point speech, the President also noted that “success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan.” Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen has been even more explicit: “It is absolutely critical that the safe havens in Pakistan get shut down. We cannot succeed in Afghanistan without that.” However, U.S. policy in Pakistan has received considerably fewer resources than those that have been expended in Afghanistan. The Administration has largely relied on covert means, such as drone strikes or Special Forces operations against AQ or Afghan Taliban leadership—most in close (but secret) cooperation with the Pakistani military and government—as well as on diplomatic and financial engagement with the Pakistani state. Despite extensive efforts to smooth rocky relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, allegations of Pakistani complicity with or failure to control anti-NATO insurgent groups carrying out cross-border attacks, combined with covert U.S. activities (most recently the Navy SEAL raid against bin Laden), have brought the relationship between the two states to a new low.

The Situation in Afghanistan

In his speech this June, President Obama argued that “we’re starting this drawdown from a position of strength,” having killed bin Laden, put al Qaeda “on the path to defeat,” captured multiple Taliban strongholds, and increased the size of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) by 100,000. Still, the surge has produced what incoming CIA Director David Petraeus and others have repeatedly called “fragile and reversible” progress. Indeed, the CIA recently concluded that the war in Afghanistan is heading towards a “stalemate.”
In the early days of the troop surge, a “demonstration” effort to take the town of Marja took far longer than anyone expected. A senior U.S. official, recalling General Stanley A. McChrystal’s remark that Afghans would have a “government in a box, ready to roll” as soon as Marja was retaken, concedes that McChrystal’s optimism was “a mistake.” There are other concerning setbacks. Only six months after withdrawing from the Pech Valley in eastern Afghanistan, U.S. forces have been forced to return to tame resurgent violence. Finally, the International Crisis Group observes that the ANSF “have thus far proved unable to enforce the law, counter the insurgency, or even secure the seven [relatively peaceful] regions” that were recently handed over to them as part of the gradual transfer of security responsibilities.

Although U.S., British, NATO, and Afghan forces have, for the most part, secured Kabul, insurgents still conduct occasional spectacular attacks there, including one on the morning Lute called you into his office. A significant majority of the country is rural and beyond the control of either coalition forces or the Afghan central government. The major effort that was planned for the surge—taking control of Kandahar, the Taliban’s spiritual stronghold—never fully materialized. In July, Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, was assassinated by a close associate in his home in Kandahar. A few weeks later, the mayor of Kandahar, Ghulam Haider Hamidi, was assassinated by a suicide bomber who hid the explosives under his turban.

Insurgents planted close to 15,000 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in 2010, an over-60% increase over last year; close to 270 U.S. troops were killed by IEDs, roughly as many as in the three previous years combined; and close to 3,400 were injured, a nearly-180% increase over last year. 2010 also saw a record number of international troop casualties—over 700, compared with about 520 in 2009. August 2011 was the deadliest month for U.S. troops, almost half of whom were killed when a Taliban insurgent shot down a Chinook helicopter in eastern Afghanistan. Furthermore, the United Nations recorded a 15% rise in Afghan civilian casualties in the first six months of this year compared with the first six months of last year, with May being the deadliest month since the UN began tracking that figure in 2007. Critics of the war argue that the surge in troops has worsened, rather than improved, the security situation by increasing a sense of occupation held by many Afghans who have joined the ranks of the Taliban.

Already stretched thin in Afghanistan, the U.S. has to contend with troop reductions by war-weary allies. France will withdraw 1,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2012, Britain will withdraw 500 by the end of 2012, and Germany will make its first withdrawal of troops at the end of this year. While there have been divisions and frustrations within the alliance about troops contributions and rules of engagement, it is important to note that partners like Canada (which has lost over 150 soldiers in the campaign) have maintained steadfast commitments to the mission—often at significant political cost. Dutch forces (whose casualties included the son of the Dutch military chief, killed by an insurgent IED) were withdrawn after the coalition government in that country fell over opposition to the Afghan campaign. It is unclear how long such commitments, even from the most steadfast U.S. allies, can be maintained after a decade at war.
These violence statistics and the reduction in allied support underscore the urgency of building the ANSF. By October, there will be approximately 172,000 members of the Afghan National Army and 134,000 members of the Afghan police. The goal is to bolster the total number to 379,000 by next October. Desertion, corruption, illiteracy, and penetration by Islamists are a few of the formidable challenges to improving the ANSF’s competence. Lieutenant General William Caldwell, commander of NATO’s training mission, explains that “of the new recruits coming in…only about one out of every ten can even write their name….it’s kind of staggering. It’s hard for me to understand myself….They don’t even recognize numbers. They can’t even do simple mathematics, and therefore the element of corruption can creep in almost immediately, and the accountability of equipment is very, very difficult.” Caldwell has suggested that several thousand international trainers could be needed to support the ANSF until at least 2020.

Caldwell’s statement raises questions about how to sustain the training of Afghan troops with the 2014 deadline looming. It is unclear, for example, how Afghanistan will obtain the estimated $8 billion per year, now supplied by foreign donors, that will be required to fund the ANSF. After all, the entire Afghan National budget is only around $3-4 billion. Nor is it clear how Afghanistan will even be able to sustain a viable economy, considering that an estimated 97% of its GDP comes from military and development aid and in-country spending by NATO troops. The fear is that “Afghanistan will become a narco-economy post-2014.” Afghanistan already produces over 90% of the world’s opium, an effort that puts an estimated $300 million into the Taliban’s coffers. Incidentally, the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan recently concluded that U.S. contracts have been the second-greatest source of Taliban funds, a reality that speaks to how entrenched corruption is in Afghanistan.

Reflecting on the above, most observers believe that a negotiated settlement of the war is the only viable outcome. Exploratory peace talks between U.S. and the Taliban leadership earlier this year collapsed after details of three sessions were leaked to the Washington Post and Der Spiegel, revealing Tayyab Agha—Mullah Omar’s former private secretary—as the key Taliban negotiator. In a lengthy message marking the end of Ramadan, however, Omar acknowledged for the first time that the Taliban has been negotiating with U.S. forces. According to journalist Ahmed Rashid, he “is sending a clear message to his fighters that future political talks are a possibility, while signaling to the Americans that he may eventually be prepared to broaden the scope of the dialogue and those already participating in it.”

The Situation in Pakistan

Admiral Mullen summarized conventional wisdom on Pakistan when he called it “the epicenter of terrorism.” Although the Pakistani military has taken on insurgent groups that it believes threaten the government’s survival, it has been less aggressive in its pursuit of anti-NATO insurgents who go over the border to attack coalition forces in Afghanistan and terrorist groups that do not threaten the Pakistani state but may promote its interests in the region. Of particular concern is the Haqqani network. The military has staged some raids in North Waziristan but has thus far refused to launch a sustained incursion into the area, often considered the global headquarters of Islamic extremism. Mullen’s successor, General Martin Dempsey, has observed that Pakistan’s outlook is anchored in the conviction that “India poses an existential threat to [its]
existence while the terrorists that operate with some impunity in North West Frontier Province and [the] Federally Administered Tribal Areas are less of a threat to them.”

Pakistan bristles at such suggestions. The Foreign Minister, Hina Rabbani Khar, argues that “Pakistan is the first one to suffer because of terrorism, because of militancy. Pakistan is doing it [countering militants inside Pakistan] for itself. You don’t need cajoling on that, that is in our national interest.” There is little doubt that the post-9/11 period has exacted a great toll on Pakistan, which claims that it has lost 35,000 people in its war against extremists, including over 3,000 soldiers, and has suffered losses of almost $78 billion.

The U.S.-Pakistan relationship has long been fraught with tension—tension that has escalated sharply since the U.S. began conducting drone strikes inside northwest Pakistan to put pressure on the “syndicate” of terrorist groups that operate there. The Bush administration conducted 42 such strikes between 2004 and 2008. The Obama administration has accelerated that campaign dramatically, having carried out 227 to date—56 this year alone. While still CIA Director, Leon Panetta called this effort “the most aggressive operation that CIA has been involved in in our history.” While the drone strikes are often carried out with tacit Pakistani cooperation, they have damaged America’s already poor standing among ordinary Pakistanis. Former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair has warned that “as the drone campaign wears on, hatred of America is increasing in Pakistan….Our reliance on high-tech strikes that pose no risk to our soldiers is bitterly resented in a country that cannot duplicate such feats of warfare without cost to its own troops.”

Already rocky, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has taken a sharp turn for the worse this year. In January, a man who was later revealed to be a CIA contractor, Raymond Davis, killed two men in Lahore. Although he was freed a few months later after more than $2 million in “blood money” was paid to the dead men’s relatives, the incident fueled conspiracy theories about U.S. operations there and undermined ties between the CIA and Pakistan’s intelligence services. The SEAL team raid on bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, in May, strained relations further. Panetta infuriated Pakistani officials with his observation that the Pakistani government was either “involved” in sheltering bin Laden or “incompetent” in failing to detect that his compound was located less than a mile from the Pakistan Military Academy. Records from the cell phone of bin Laden’s courier reveal that bin Laden used Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen as part of his support network inside Pakistan; the network is known to have strong ties to Pakistan’s country’s intelligence services. Pakistan publicly countered that the U.S. action constituted a flagrant violation of its territorial sovereignty and is demanding that the U.S. sign a detailed agreement spelling out its rules of engagement inside the country, while privately worrying that the raid exposed vulnerabilities in its air defenses that India could exploit. The U.S. has so far refused, noting only “the possibility of a brief bilateral statement of principles that would identify common interests and goals.” Pakistan expelled over 100 U.S. military trainers in the aftermath, and the U.S. responded by suspending $800 million in military assistance.

Despite these tit-for-tat blows, most observers suspect that the U.S. and Pakistan have little choice but to cooperate with each other, however haltingly. Even so, the U.S. is concerned that the accumulating strains on their relationship may compel Pakistan to turn east. Pakistan has made no secret of the fact that it considers China its closest ally—a consistent partner, as
opposed to its fair-weather friend in the U.S.

The U.S. government has also long been concerned with Pakistan’s nuclear program, particularly with the possibility that Pakistani nukes could fall into the hands of terrorist groups. These concerns are no secret to Pakistan’s leaders, and fuel their understandable paranoia that the U.S. might attempt to seize or disable the country’s arsenal. Former President Pervez Musharraf has warned that any such attempt would lead to “total confrontation” between the two countries: “These are assets which are the pride of Pakistan, assets which are dispersed and very secure in very secure places, guarded by a corps of 18,000 soldiers...This is not an army which doesn’t know how to fight. This is an army which has fought three wars. Please understand that.” Bin Laden’s killing has only intensified that paranoia, captured by preeminent Pakistani physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy: “Most Pakistanis believe the jihadist scenario is something that the West has created as a bogey, an excuse, so they can screw us, defang and denuclearize us.” It has also reinforced the view of Pakistan’s national-security establishment that these weapons are the ultimate security blanket. The father of the Pakistani bomb, A. Q. Khan, summarized the lesson that many of its members have drawn: “No nuclear-capable country has been subjected to aggression or occupied, or had its borders redrawn.”

Having tripled its nuclear arsenal over the past decade to over 100 weapons—and with a stockpile of fissile material that has been expanding even more rapidly—Pakistan is on track to become the fourth-largest holder of nuclear weapons in the world. Satellite imagery that was taken in April suggests that it is building a fourth plutonium-producing reactor at its Khushab nuclear site. Pakistan’s military has grown increasingly reliant on its arsenal to deter India’s overwhelming superiority in conventional arms. Because this strategy requires the dispersal of nuclear weapons and, especially in crises, looser command and control, it increases the risk of the nightmare scenario: nuclear terrorism. As the Congressionally-established Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation concluded, “were one to map terrorism and weapons of mass destruction today, all roads would intersect in Pakistan.”

The defensiveness that Pakistan’s leadership displays when discussing the country’s nuclear weapons—Interior Minister Rehman Malik has declared them “200% safe”—betrays its inability to protect even highly secure military sites. In May, four Taliban fighters succeeded in raiding a naval base in Karachi that is located only 15 miles away from a rumored nuclear-weapons storage site; it took 100 commandos, rangers, and marines 16 hours to retake the base.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s restraint after the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, widely alleged to have had Pakistani complicity, was superhuman. But he and his government have warned unambiguously that the next major terrorist attack on India that shows signs of Pakistani support will trigger a sharp military response.

**Assignment**

Given the disturbing trend lines in Pakistan, the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, and the inextricable link between the two countries, General Lute believes that we have reached a critical juncture for reassessing U.S. interests in the region. He expects you to
answer two key questions: what conditions do we need in Afghanistan to achieve our objectives in Pakistan, and how can we achieve those conditions in Afghanistan?

You are to prepare a strategic-options outline for Lute assessing current U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan and your recommendation for U.S. strategy going forward. You are not assessing what the U.S. should have done differently to this point. Rather, you should base your assessment and recommendations on the present situation, including the timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Among the specific questions that Lute wants you to think hard about in preparing your response are:

- After ten years of war, what are vital U.S. national interests in Afghanistan and in Pakistan? What factors are driving developments that threaten our national interests?
- After a decade of seeking Pakistan’s cooperation as a base to strike into Afghanistan, does the administration’s emerging policy of using Afghanistan as a base to strike into Pakistan have the best chance of protecting vital U.S. national interests? What alternative strategies, if any, should the administration consider to achieve its primary objectives of defeating al Qaeda and assuring that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons remain secure?

Lute leaves you with one additional assignment. The President is already being accused of abandoning Afghanistan, and particularly Afghan women, after more than a decade of promises to help rebuild the country into a democratic society that respects fundamental human rights. He has asked Lute for a single paragraph, to be used in press briefings, in which the president explains whether that remains a strategic goal of the United States, and if so, whether the U.S. is still committed to devoting billions of dollars in resources toward that objective. If not, how does he explain the shift to the rest of the world?

Logistics

Each student must write a one-page strategic-options outline for this case, although you may choose to write a three-page strategic options memo. Outlines should be uploaded to the class page by no later than 4:00pm on Tuesday, September 20. In addition, you are required to bring two hard copies of the assignment to class. No late papers will be accepted. You are permitted, but not required, to attach an appendix of no longer than one half page that identifies questions of fact or analysis for which you do not have answers, but for which you believe that an individual who was writing the memo in the real world would either have answers or be able to find answers.

As with all assignments, please write your Harvard University ID number on your memo rather than your name to ensure impartial grading.

Although all course assistants are available to answer questions, the CA who is primarily responsible for this case is Jessica Blankshain (jblanksh@fas.harvard.edu) Jessica will hold office hours from 9am-12pm on Friday, September 16th (see course website for location).

**Reading List for Case #1: Af/Pak**

**Required:**

- Allison, Graham. “Pakistan: What About the Nukes?” Newsweek.com, 28 December 2007 (CP #6)
- Biddle, Stephen, “The Difference Two Years Make,” American Interest, 7:1, September/October 2011, pp. 40-49 (CP #6)
- Brulliard, Karin and Karen DeYoung, “U.S. efforts fail to convince Pakistan’s top general to target Taliban,” Washington Post, 12/31/10 (CP #6)
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, “Within Obama’s war cabinet, a looming battle over pace of Afghanistan drawdown,” Washington Post, 3/30/11 (CP #6)
- Chivers, C. J., Carlotta Gall, Andrew W. Lehren et al., “View Is Bleaker than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan,” 7/26/10 (CP #6)
- Cohen, Stephen, “Failure in AfPak: How the US Got It Wrong,” National Interest, 7/15/11 (CP #6)
- Gregory, Shaun, “Terrorist Tactics in Pakistan Threaten Nuclear Weapons Safety,” CTC Sentinel, 4:6 (June 2011), pp. 4-7 (CP #6)
- Ignatius, David, “Little Choice but to Depend on Pakistan’s Help in Afghanistan,” Washington Post, 7/28/10 (CP #6)
- Kissinger, Henry A. “How to exit Afghanistan without creating wider conflict,” Washington Post, 6/7/11 (CP #6)
- Lamont, James, “Pakistan’s army battles enemy within,” Financial Times, 6/13/11 (CP #6)
- Obama, Barack, Speech to West Point on the war in Afghanistan, December 1, 2009 (CP #6)
• Rashid, Ahmed, “And Hate Begat Hate,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2011 (CP #6)
• Rubin, Alissa J., “Pressure Mounts on All Parties in Afghan War to Begin Talks,” *New York Times*, 3/16/11 (CP #6)
• Sanger, David E., “Rethinking the War’s What-ifs,” *New York Times*, 8/1/10 (CP #6)

Recommended:

• BBC, “Timeline: Pakistan,” August, 2010
• Cohen, Stephen P., The Idea of Pakistan, Chapter Eight: Pakistan’s Futures and Chapter Nine: American Options (pp. 267-329)
• McChrystal, Stanley, Report: Commander’s Initial Assessment, Afghanistan, August 30, 2009, pp. 1-30
To: General Douglas Lute, Deputy National Security Advisor for Af/Pak  
From: 50839885  
Re: Rethinking Af/Pak

Issue. After 10 years, the Afghan government’s inability to govern its territory and security forces’ failure to secure its citizenry and infrastructure necessitated a policy review. While the Taliban (TB) and Al Qaeda (AQ) networks there have been disrupted, they have been resurgent because of bases of support in Pakistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan (soured lately by US relations) does little to bolster US efforts to stamp out insurgents and terrorists there.

Interests.
Vital
- Prevent the use of nuclear weapons on the US or its forces

Extremely Important
- Ensure security of Pakistani nuclear material and equipment
- Disrupt Al Qaeda and prevent safe haven

Important
- Promote pluralism, freedom, and democracy without destabilization

Operational Objectives.
- Interdict AQ key leaders/activities/capabilities in Pakistan without destabilizing national structures; maintain strike capability from Afghanistan
- Facilitate viable governance and economy in Afghanistan
- Speed creation and effectiveness of Afghan security forces
- Prevent Indo-Pakistani conflict
- Ensure logistical continuity (air, Pakistani GLOC, and Northern Distribution Network)
- Do all the above at an acceptable level of cost, determined by NSC (est: < $1 trillion)

Discussion. A quick, precipitous withdrawal signals our defeat and will leave a security vacuum that TB/AQ are likely to fill in Afghanistan, and a political vacuum that will fuel further social and political anti-Americanism. Pakistan remains the crux, as tribal sanctuaries there provide a logistical and operational base of support for TB/AQ elements. However, Pakistan’s military cooperation in FATA/NWFP/Baluchistan has potential to cause blowback and destablize Pakistan itself. A stable Pakistan capable of securing nuclear material is paramount. Increased US military action there is also likely to cause similar blowback. The northern tribes are seen as a key to the defense plan against an Indian invasion, which Pakistan regards as its primary existential threat.

Strategic Options:
Option 1 - The Obama Plan (a Security-Governance first strategy)
Description: This plan has three prongs: (a) Military surge (30,000 troops) to create security momentum for increased governance and rapid development of Afghan security forces, (b) conditionality of increased civilian support, contingent on success of governance and eradication of corruption, (c) constructive Pakistani partnership.
Pros
- Will create security gains and momentum and more time for improved governance
-
• Allows for production/training of more Afghan security forces
• Chances are fair (>50%) that governance gains can be effective and lasting

Cons
• Has only small economic component; GoA remains dependent on foreign aid
• Vague notion of Pakistani partnership doesn’t define goals or methods

Option 2 – Improving regional economic links
This course of action builds on the Obama plan but builds on ongoing development in Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan), focusing on linking Afghanistan economically with its northern and southern neighbors in order to (1) provide the GoA with additional and lasting revenue streams, and (2) create regional stakeholders in Afghan’s security and regional stability. This plan envisions removing procedural barriers to trade and constructing road, rail, and pipeline links that would complete a trade network, connecting producing and consuming economies. Plan necessitates continued security, governance, and anti-corruption efforts of the Obama Plan.

Pros
• Provides GoA with significant alternate revenue streams as transit/transmission state, which facilitates funding of government functions and security operations
• Severs dependence of GoA on American/foreign aid; good for long-term stability
• Links Afghan economy with region; creates stakeholders

Cons
• Foreign economic involvement requires a minimum security situation; may require Afghan Army to focus on infrastructure security
• Development of this infrastructure will take massive investment/support from international institutions (Asian Development Bank, World Bank, foreign govt) ~ $500B
• Development will take time and may extend need for American/NATO security advisors to complete

Option 3 – Containment and Isolation
This course of action acknowledges that troops cannot remain in Afghanistan indefinitely and that auxiliary military action in an unstable, nuclear armed state to eradicate TB/AQ bases of support is out of the question. This option also holds that the current TB/AQ situation can be contained by isolating their leaders and activities in Pakistan’s frontier while further action to degrade their capabilities continues over the long-term. Continue drone strikes to disrupt leadership and prevent from mounting attacks outside Afghanistan/Pakistan. Pressure Pakistan military to continue disruption efforts; this will require re-authorizing military assistance funds (with strict conditionality) and re-entry of military trainers / intelligence officials; may also require reassurances of Indian non-aggression to free up troops committed to Pakistani eastern defenses. Isolation will require focused Afghan Army and Border Service operations to limit incursions, and must be capitalized on by improving and extending governance. US troops transition to advise and support role (majority to redeploy by September 2012), maintaining strategic strike capability to protect Afghan government and security forces and disrupt AQ/TB elements. Will require appropriate action to restrict growth of fundamentalism in FATA/NWFP.

Pros
• Reduces US footprint; Troop redeployment occurs more rapidly and after successes
• Strikes a political balance between partial operational success (UBL is dead, Af is secure), bringing the troops home, and continued military action against AQ elements
• Forces Afghan ownership of its own security situation

Cons
• Permanent reassurances of Indian non-aggression are unlikely given Kashmir dispute; temporary reassurances are likely but could be derailed by additional attacks in India
• Focuses on “disrupt” instead of “defeat”; must maintain force structure and civilian advisory equivalent to enable Pakistani/Afghani continued pressure on AQ
• Goals of conditionality of Pakistani performance for US military aid is difficult to establish, given loss of human life in Pakistan’s prosecution of war
• Efforts to curb long term fundamentalist attitudes in Pakistan are impossible w/out Pakistani support

Recommendation: Option 2: Improving regional economic links
This course of action capitalizes on existing and ongoing investment in Central Asia, which is occurring to Afghanistan’s north as a result of oil and gas revenues. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, national investors, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have come together under CAREC (Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation) to create a “New Silk Road”, envisioned to link China and Europe through Central Asia. Rail and road links are already being created or improved, and new delivery systems for Central Asian oil and gas wealth as well as hydroelectricity are being planned. Linking Afghanistan to these networks strategically extends this network, effectively linking the world’s largest populations and economies (China, India, and Europe). What is lacking is a rail network linking Indian gauge, standard gauge (China and Iran), and Soviet gauge (countries to the north). Afghanistan is poised to be the missing link in this trans-Eurasian rail system. Additionally, creating Afghanistan’s status as a gas-transit country does two primary things: it creates other nation’s stakes in its continued security, and it provides the GoA with much-needed income as transit revenues stack up (estimated at $300 million/year). Investing sources are already available; the US has a temporary ability to affect investment and facilitate the expansion of this network, creating long-term economic growth and income for the Afghan government, potentially removing the eventual need for foreign aid.

Implementation in order of priority:
• Constitute an Afghan highway security force, charged with Ring Road security
• Complete paving of the Afghan Ring Road
• Complete paving of Herat-Kabul highway
• Augment Iranian, Pakistani, Tajik, and Uzbek investment in Afghan rail system by:
  o Approving Tajik-Iranian rail plans from Herat to Mazar-e-Sharif to the Tajik border
  o Approving Pakistani plans to link Chaman with Kandahar
  o Link completion of Uzbek rail extension to wider network
  o Establish gauge-switching stations
• Promote consummation of agreement/construction of TAPI gas pipeline through Afghanistan
• Develop energy contracts to link Afghanistan with Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan energy systems (chiefly hydroelectric)
Is the United States still pursuing a democratic Afghanistan as a strategy?

Recognizing that legitimate power comes only from the people, the United States strives in all cases to promote the democratic values of self-determination and equal representation abroad. This has always been the case in Afghanistan, where for the first time in history, the US-backed government has overseen reforms that provide voting and political participation rights to previously repressed minorities. This progress has been remarkable and swift. Women can vote and participate with an equal voice on the political stage. Women are in key positions in government and run television and radio stations. But the United States also recognizes that not all democracies will look like ours. Some systems will have to adapt representational form of government to the needs of their society and culture. Our strategy for political endstate in Afghanistan is a government that is stable, capable of defending itself, doesn’t allow terrorist safe havens, and respects the rights of its people to participate in its government.
To: GENERAL DOUGLAS LUTE, DPTY NAT’L SECURITY ADVISOR, AF/PAK
From: 50802620
Re: AF/PAK STRATEGY (SEPTEMBER 20, 2011)

Issue: Determine present and future conditions required and corresponding course of action to achieve U.S. objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

National Interests at Stake: Vital: 1) Prevent threat of nuclear weapons on U.S. or military forces abroad Extremely Important: 1) Prevent threat of nuclear weapons anywhere, 2) Prevent regional proliferation of WMD, 3) Suppress terrorism

Operational Objectives: Our success in our intervention will be measured by our ability to 1) Defeat and dismantle Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, 2) Secure Pakistan’s arsenal of nuclear weapons from terrorists and others who would harm the U.S. and allies, 3) Strengthen AF/PAK in-country governance amenable to U.S. interests 3) Minimize American casualties

Discussion: Obama promised AFG U.S. troop withdrawal, ending in 2014, but threats of instability and Al-Qaeda resurgence linger. Pak is greater risk with Al-Qaeda safe harbors along the border, anti-American extremism sentiment, and a rapidly expanding nuclear arsenal that terrorists could access on a black market or through an insider-job. The relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. has deteriorated recently since Pakistan has felt its sovereignty was infringed. A cohesive, updated AF/PAK strategy needs to address the vital security challenges.

Strategic Options: 1) Invest in AF/Pressure PAK: Proceed with troop withdrawal timetable but alternatives to militancy and incentivize popular allegiance to U.S. Use alliance with Afghanistan as platform to increase drone strikes and covert Special Forces engagement in FATA/NWF for targeted Al Qaeda attacks and gather intelligence about PAK nuclear arsenal. 2) Oraganize Support and Withdrawal: Adjust pace of AFG withdrawal to conditions on the ground to incentivize Karzai’s accountability for decreasing corruption and improving security. Provide conditional support to PAK’s NCA to help secure nuclear their arsenal (e.g. with PALS) from black market and militants and gather jihadi intelligence in return for decreasing drone attacks on border and/or hosting negotiated nuclear treaty talks with India. 3) Negotiate Settlement with Taliban + Option 2 for PAK Recognizing weakness of civilian governments and vital national interests at stake, negotiate new governance arrangement that includes Taliban presence with precondition of rooting out Al Qaeda. Pursue Option 2 of conditional support in Pakistan. Pursue 2) if Taliban can be trusted, may be most direct way to control Al-Qaeda resurgence, may increase strength / stability of governance. Cons: politically unpopular at home and seen to be negotiating with enemy; Taliban may not be trustworthy and open door for Al-Qaeda resurgence rendering war effort obsolete.

Recommendation and Implementation: Pursue Option 2: Conditional Support and Withdrawal over next 18 month trial period. If it becomes clear Karzai cannot hold country secure after withdrawal, fallback to option 3 to negotiate with Taliban. PAK’s formidable nuclear arsenal means conditional support is preferable to option 1’s riskier approach.
Question on Human Rights in Afghanistan:
For over ten years now, courageous American men and women in our military, USAID and the State Department have done important work to increase peace and security and improve the lives of the Afghan people. Americans have spent approximately $20B on aid to Afghanistan in the last ten years and while there have been a myriad of challenges, we have seen important results. In many cities, girls are now attending schools for the first time. Democratic elections have proceeded despite militants’ attempts to destroy them. Populations have access to roads and electricity for the first time, which has enabled many to access new markets and increase their income. Our mission is and has always been to help Afghans gain the capacity and resources to take charge of their own development and future. While we will not abandon our friends in Afghanistan, as evidenced by our continued USAID programs, we recognize the need for nation-building at home. Our children also need better schools and increasing domestic employment opportunities have become our most important priority. We have achieved important steps to improving Afghans’ lives and we will continue to work with the Afghan government and local organizations to support and empower the Afghans to safeguard their rights.

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ISP 202: Central Issues of American Foreign Policy

Case No. 5 Could Terrorism in Kashmir Trigger Nuclear War Between India and Pakistan?
Distributed: March 10, 2003
Due: March 17, 2003

“India and Pakistan haven’t really had their Cuban missile crisis yet. They have not been through the days of sleeplessness and anxiety that they were about to pull the trigger. This may be the beginning of their Cuban missile crisis, but I think it is too early to say that this is a stable nuclear relationship.”

Interview with George Perkovich, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 27th, 2001

Situation: The date is June 11, 2003. The largest terrorist attack in Kashmir in recent memory has led to a sharp escalation of tensions between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan. Both sides have mobilized hundreds of thousands of troops and moved to the highest alert. You are a NSC staffer and have been asked to write a memo addressing how the US should respond to the crisis and prevent a potential nuclear war between them.

The World in February-March 2003: Despite its inability to secure a second resolution on Iraq in the UN Security Council, the U.S. military, together with Britain and a strong coalition of allies, proceeded in March with a quick and decisive operation to replace Saddam’s regime. The Iraqi military resistance was crushed in just a few days, with few American casualties and limited casualties among the Iraqi civilian population as well. Saddam and several of his closest confidants were assassinated as the result of a coup staged by a group of high-ranking Iraqi military officials.

Post-war inspections of secret Iraqi military sites showed that Saddam’s regime possessed a limited arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Fortunately, Saddam did not succeed in using these weapons against the allied forces or Israel during the course of the war. These results softened criticism of the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, though resentment about US unilateralism and disregard for international institutions lingers.

After U.S. military and diplomatic victory in Iraq, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il realized that the window of opportunity for nuclear blackmail of the United States had closed, and that refusal to comply with the international non-proliferation regime had become too dangerous. Marking an unprecedented shift from his previous pattern of defiant behavior, Kim Jong Il agreed to freeze North Korea’s nuclear program for a U.S. guarantee that it would not pursue a military solution in North Korea, plus other considerations received from South Korea and Japan.

As a result of what has come to be called the “short, glorious victory” in Iraq and the successful resolution of the confrontation with North Korea, the United States assumed an even greater position of strength and credibility in the international system.
The rest of the world remains essentially as it is today, or as natural, straight-line evolutions from this point. Pakistan continues to assist the United States in the war on terrorism and Osama bin Laden has not been found.

**Background: The Brink of War in Spring 2002:** By late June of 2002, the biggest war scare since the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament had been temporarily defused. The spark for the brinkmanship occurred in Indian-controlled Kashmir on May 14. Three suspected militants in army uniforms opened fire at an Indian army camp, killing 33 and wounding 45 others – many civilians. New Delhi blamed Pakistani-backed Islamic rebels for the assault while Islamabad denied the charges. The situation quickly escalated with intense shelling across the Line of Control as well as the expulsion of the Pakistani Ambassador to India.

Both sides amassed over a million troops along the Line of Control increasing international worry that a confrontation was imminent. A May 22, a speech by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee did little to assuage international fears: "Be ready for sacrifice. Your goal should be victory. It's time to fight a decisive battle." President Musharraf echoed the call to war some days later when he retorted, "We do not want war. But if war is thrust upon us, we would respond with full might and give a befitting reply."

India’s missile tests in late April as well as Pakistan’s missile tests in late May aggravated the deteriorating conditions in the region. Secretary of State Colin Powell stressed the urgency of the situation when he declared, "It [the nuclear weapon] is not just another weapon in a toolbox of weapons. It crosses a line that the world does not want to see crossed... we don't want to go down this road to test any propositions as to whether they will or they won't."

At the end of May, Munir Akram, Pakistan’s newly-appointed Ambassador to the United Nations, announced to the world, "India should not have the license to kill with conventional weapons while Pakistan's hands are tied regarding other means to defend itself. ... If India reserved the right to use conventional weapons, how could Pakistan - a weaker power - be expected to rule out all means of deterrence." Quickly thereafter, the US State Department recommended that American citizens in India leave the country. The United Nations and several other countries swiftly followed suit.

Ultimately, round-the-clock international pressure and aggressive US diplomatic negotiations steered the two countries away from war – albeit without resolving the underlying tensions between the two nations. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf’s assurances to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage in early June proved a turning point. In his pledge, Musharraf reiterated the commitment he made in January 2002. The Pakistani President unequivocally condemned all acts of terrorism, including those carried out in the name of freeing Kashmir’s Muslim majority from Indian rule, and guaranteed that infiltration across the Line of Control would be cease.

These statements followed the anti-terrorist actions the Pakistani President’s actions took earlier that year. After nearly escalating to war in January 2002, tensions between India and Pakistan eased after Musharraf’s January 12 speech redefined Pakistan’s role in the international effort against terrorism and Islamic extremism. Musharraf unequivocally condemned all acts of
terrorism, including those carried out in the name of freeing Kashmir’s Muslim majority from Indian rule, and banned the two groups that India accused of sponsoring terrorist activity. Moreover, he backed up his words with action when he ordered the Pakistani government to round up some 1,430 suspected radicals and sealed 390 offices of militant groups as part of a widening anti-terrorism crackdown. Many of the targeted militant groups had received unofficial Pakistani backing for their activities, mainly through the Pakistan military’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI).

Since 2002: A Crisis Waiting to Happen
Although a combination of factors culminating in a decisive United States intervention was able to prevent a violent exchange in 2002, the deep-seated issues that brought the region to the edge of war were never resolved. Fundamental differences about a divided, occupied Kashmir, Indian unwillingness to permit international involvement in the dispute or a referendum among Kashmiris, and Pakistani sympathy for and support of Kashmiri “freedom fighters”—together created a dangerous cocktail threatening to destabilize the region once again. Despite Musharraf’s assurances, India continued to insist that Pakistan’s anti-terrorist crackdown was mostly eyewash for the international community. Moreover, the quick and decisive U.S. attack to topple Saddam, apparently emboldened India’s military and nationalist politicians who seemed more determined than ever to solve the Kashmiri problem permanently.

On May 30 2003, India announced that it had unambiguous evidence that terrorist support bases and training camps of the two deadliest groups, Jaish-e-Muhammad (the Army of Muhammad) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure) were still operating along the line of control. Both have been officially declared terrorist organizations by the United States. US analysts believe Jaish-e-Muhammad has ties to the terrorist network Al Qaeda and orchestrated the kidnapping and murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Lashkar-e-Taiba still enjoys considerable support within Pakistan because of its extensive education and health programs. India responded by increasing its military presence along the 1,800 km India-Pakistan border and increasing its security activities within Kashmir.

US intelligence sources cautioned the Bush administration that although President Musharraf seemed to be in control, he remains dependent on the military’s support to maintain his grip on power. Moreover, US analysts believe that there are rogue elements operating within the Pakistani ISI that continue to provide financial assistance and arms to militant groups and have ambitions to undermine Musharraf in hopes of installing a more nationalistic leader.

A Terrorist Attack: One Man’s Freedom Fighter…
The catalyst for the current crisis occurred on June 2nd, as the snows were melting in Kashmir. A private aircraft packed with explosives crashed into the heavily fortified legislative assembly building in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir. Initial reports confirmed over 380 civilian and soldier casualties, including 71 sitting legislative members, although there are fears the number may reach as high as 700-1000 once the rubble is cleared.

The day after the tragedy, the Indian parliament implicated Jaish-e-Muhammad in the attack as well as Islamabad’s Inter-Service Intelligence agency, though they did not disclose any supporting evidence, citing an ongoing investigation. “The techniques used by the terrorists
indicate that they were trained in Pakistan. These kind of attacks could only have been planned and carried out by a terrorist organization with extensive financial backing and support," said retired Major General Afsir Karim, a terrorism expert. "Terrorist camps still exist" in Pakistan's portion of Kashmir, he said, adding that banners with the names of the organizations have been removed. Indian legislators immediately called for decisive retaliation of the kind taken by the United States in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 suicide attacks on New York and Washington.

President Pervez Musharraf immediately condemned the attack, labeling it a tragedy and offering his sympathy and condolences to India and the victims’ families. A Kashmiri guerrilla alliance, the Muthida Jihad Council in the Pakistan-ruled part of Kashmir, said it had no connection with the attack. Nevertheless, political analysts speculated if the attack turned out to be by Kashmir separatists, India could launch a counter-attack across the Kashmir Line of Control into Pakistani-held territory. Srichand Kripalani, from India’s ruling political party, the BJP, gave a fiery speech arguing that, “The government should do what America has done in Afghanistan and what Israel is doing in Palestine. The government should not shy away from attacking Pakistan, if involvement is proved.” On June 3rd, India recalled its ambassador to Pakistan, stopped all cross-border traffic between the two nations, and in an unprecedented diplomatic move, abrogated the 41-year standing water treaty between the two nations.

**Eyeball to Eyeball.**

Following the terrorist attack, India mobilized over 500,000 defense forces (roughly the size of the Pakistan’s entire standing army) along the 1,800 km Pakistan border and moved two heavy (armored and mechanized) divisions into India-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan responded by deploying tanks, armored personnel carriers and long-range artillery out of garrison near the border city of Lahore as well as strengthening border defense forces. On June 5th, the two nation's militaries exchanged artillery fire across the India-Pakistan border, though no troops were killed and no maneuver forces crossed the border.

On June 8th, in language reminiscent of President Bush after the 11th of September, India’s Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee went on television to say India's battle against terrorism had reached its final stage and demanded action from Pakistan or else. “This is an attack against civilization. The only way to bring an end to the terrorist leeching of Indian blood is to liquidate the terrorists and their sponsors whoever they are, wherever they are. Furthermore, we must ensure the safety and security of our forces operating in Kashmir,” Vajpayee stated during a televised address to the nation.

Meanwhile, President Musharraf once again denied that Pakistan had played any supporting role in the attack. He went on to say that while Pakistan will continue to crackdown on terrorist activity in all its forms within its border, war against terrorism cannot deny a people’s legitimate right to seek self-determination in the face of oppression by foreign governments. These words were quickly interpreted in India as Pakistani support for the terrorist attack and the terrorist group Jaish-e-Muhammad.

On June 10th, when asked if India was ready for a conventional war, General Nirmal Chander told a news conference, "Yes, we are fully ready for a jolly war. The events of last May were a practice exercise for our current efforts.” However, he reiterated India's declared policy of no
first strike with nuclear weapons, "India has a very clear policy. We have declared we shall not think of using nuclear weapons first." He said a nuclear exchange on the subcontinent would be disastrous for the whole region, but stressed that any country that used nuclear weapons against an Indian target would be punished "so severely that their continuation thereafter in any form of fray will be doubtful".

US Assessments: Rational Actors?
US intelligence believes Prime Minister Vajpayee has given his Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff authorization to deliver a surgical air strike against the seven principal terrorist camps in Kashmir and Pakistan anytime over the next 10 days—at a moment when the largest number of terrorists leaders can be eliminated by the strike. India has also mobilized 3 ground corps along the India-Pakistan border near Lahore (Pakistan’s second largest city and just 18 miles north of the border). This activity may be in response to Pakistan deployments or may be preparation for an offensive—a limited invasion to seize Lahore and isolate Islamabad from southern Pakistan. Indian troops could thereby seize key north-south transport routes in the Punjab valley and effectively split Pakistan in half. Such an option appears to be preferable to war waged in Kashmir’s mountainous terrain. It is unclear whether this preparation is essentially coercive diplomacy, on the one hand, or preparation to invade and divide Pakistan, on the other. Either way, the troops would be operationally ready to invade within two days.

According to US intelligence analysts, Pakistan’s ISI sees India’s concentration of forces across the border from Lahore as preparation for a decisive attack aimed at breaking up Pakistan once and for all. India maintains a substantial advantage in conventional forces. Given that Pakistan could only respond with 2 ground corps in response to an Indian invasion, Pakistani military leaders have concluded that they may not be able to prevent a split of the nation against Indian troop concentrations. Should India invade, Musharraf would have just two options: accept a territorial loss of the Pakistani state or respond with nuclear weapons. Given Musharraf’s December 2002 revelation that during the spring crisis he warned Prime Minister Vajpayee “the moment Indian forces cross the line of control and the international border, then they should not expect a conventional war from Pakistan,” intelligence analysts believe Musharraf would choose the latter option.

Analysts contend further that if Pakistan strikes Indian forces with nuclear weapons, even if on Pakistani soil, India would almost surely retaliate with a nuclear attack on Pakistan. Pakistan’s ISI has been extremely motivated to find ways of eliminating India’s nuclear capability. Recent US intelligence reports suggest that with Chinese assistance, the ISI has made some progress in this effort. Its Chief now believes that Pakistan has a significant chance of eliminating all usable Indian nuclear weapons in a surprise strike that combined clandestine operations with a missile attack.

Indian defense and intelligence officials have also been seeking to develop options for disarming Pakistan’s nuclear capability in a surprise first strike. After Pakistani intelligence discovered evidence of India’s activity several weeks ago, Musharraf moved Pakistan’s nuclear weapons to more secure locations. Both Indian and Pakistani security officials are also aware that the US and others have been seeking to identify locations and status of their nuclear forces and have considered a full array of contingencies.
Finally, US intelligence analysts have informed the President that India has the capability to use aircraft or intermediate/short range ballistic missiles to deliver nuclear weapons. Currently, it is impossible to tell whether India has placed its nuclear forces on alert. However, intelligence believes Pakistan’s nuclear forces (primarily missile delivered) are on a heightened state of readiness and estimates a nuclear weapon could be launched at strategic targets in India with as little as two hours of unambiguous warning. Additionally, the President’s intelligence advisor has informed him that Musharraf’s hold on power is increasingly tenuous. If he is pressured to further crackdown on the ISI and replace its leaders, he may lose his support among the military and could be toppled by a more nationalistic leader.

The President is deeply worried that the crisis is spiraling out of control and could escalate to nuclear conflict, intentionally or accidentally. The President has asked his National Security Advisor to analyze the situation overnight and develop options for an immediate US response to the crisis.

Assignment: The National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, has called you into her office and instructed you to draft a three page options memo (or one page outline) to the President that addresses how the US should respond to the situation. In her guidance to you, she has asked that you identify the US national interests at stake; analyze the nature and the magnitude of the threat; develop options and assess the pros and cons of each; and make a recommendation with an implementation strategy (Remember, your strategy should include who should do what, when). Dr. Rice asked that your analysis cover, among other things, the following issues in which the President expressed an interest:

- How can the US prevent a nuclear exchange between the two nations?
- In light of Musharraf’s position, how can the US exercise leverage without worsening the situation in Pakistan?
- Lastly, what are the long-term options for building a stable nuclear relationship between the two rivals?

Case Background Material: You will find extensive background material in your course packets. However, you are not confined to the readings in the syllabus, but welcome to reach out to other sources of information. Your memo (outline or presentation), however, must be strictly your own (or the groups’) work.

Group presentations are to be no longer than 12 minutes. Groups should either email Professor Allison an electronic copy of your presentation (preferred) or bring a hard copy to his office (L-368) no later than 11:00 AM the day of your presentation for him to review prior to class.

Memos and Outlines should be emailed to Alper Tunca at alper_tunca@harvard.edu no later than 11:00 AM, March 17, 2003. You must include student ID numbers rather than names. In addition, you are required to bring 2 hardcopies of the assignment to class, where there will be 2 boxes -- one for Memos and the other for Outlines. NO late papers.
To: The President of the United States  
From: 205 7959 50  
Re: India-Pakistan Conflict

**Issue:** The recent terrorist attack in Kashmir and subsequent escalation in Indian-Pakistani tensions necessitates an immediate examination of US options for defusing the present crisis and averting nuclear war on the Indian subcontinent.

**Interests:**

*Vital*
- Suppress terrorism (especially state-sponsored terrorism) (threat: high)
- Prevent use of nuclear weapons against US (threat: medium)

*Extremely important*
- Prevent the use of nuclear weapons on the Indian subcontinent (threat: high)
- Prevent emergence of hostile regime in Pakistan (threat: high).

*Important*
- Encourage spread of democratic institutions/values (threat: medium)

**Objectives:**

- Prevent nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan
- Prevent operational deployment of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan
- Stabilise situation in Kashmir
- Maintain Pakistani support in war on terror
- Facilitate long-term stabilisation of Indian-Pakistani nuclear relationship

**Discussion:** Key questions: (1) What degree of Indian retaliation should US accept (on a spectrum ranging from none to full invasion)? (2) How can it prevail upon the two parties to accept that level of retaliation? (Limited US leverage over India; significant leverage over Pakistan, but risk of destabilising regime if pushed too far.)

**Strategic options:**

*Option 1: Prevent Indian military action by forcing extensive action by Pakistan*
Demand from Musharraf an immediate and comprehensive crackdown on Islamic terrorist groups operating in Kashmir as well as reform of the ISI (including replacement of its most militant leaders) in the medium term. Use carrot of additional $2bn in aid, linked directly to progress on this front, and stick of re-imposition of full sanctions.

**Pros**
- If successful, averts Indian military action and concomitant risk of nuclear retaliation
- Resulting crackdown on Islamic fundamentalist groups would be helpful to war on terror

**Cons**
- Immediate, visible, radical action required to assuage Indian anger and prevent resort to military means – unclear whether Musharraf can deliver, or whether this will be enough even if he does
- Risks topple of Musharraf by nationalistic military leader or Islamic fundamentalist group
**Option 2: Indian air strikes but no invasion**

Give Vajpayee green light for limited, surgical air strikes against terrorist camps, but stress that general invasion of Pakistan will result in international isolation and immediate imposition of full sanctions by US. Emphasise that invasion is certain to result in nuclear retaliation by Pakistan and that even the perception that invasion is imminent may trigger a pre-emptive first strike. Air strikes to be accompanied by public announcement of their limited nature and the demobilisation of troops on border near Lahore to allay fear that they are precursor to full invasion. Intense diplomatic efforts (sanctions and aid) must be made to persuade Musharraf to acquiesce to air strikes and refrain from escalating conflict further.

**Pros**
- Balances India’s need for a substantial visible response with the need to avoid any action that makes nuclear retaliation by Pakistan likely

**Cons**
- Jeopardises Pakistani cooperation in war on terror
- Makes Musharraf vulnerable to military coup or popular revolt
- Could escalate conflict further

**Option 3: Send UN peacekeeping troops into Kashmir**

Troops would act as short-term buffer between Indian and Pakistani forces until tensions decline.

**Pros**
- Likely to prevent nuclear war in the short term

**Cons**
- Difficult to arrange rapidly enough to make a difference
- Likely to incur resentment from both sides – from India because it has always resisted peacekeepers, from Pakistan because it would favour the status quo, and from both because it would rekindle memories of colonial occupation
- In longer term, troops could become target of terrorist attack
- No viable exit strategy

**Recommendation: Option 2: Indian air strikes but no invasion**

Option 3, which calls for the sending in of UN peacekeepers, threatens to embroil US troops in an unending quagmire and for this reason must be rejected. Even if it could be executed in time to make a difference, in the long term it is more likely to be counterproductive (“the most inflammatory thing the West could do is try to impose a peace where it is not wanted” – Rose).

The magnitude of the terrorist attack means India will demand an immediate, and very substantial, retaliatory response (imagine a comparable attack on Massachusetts State Legislature). This means Option 1, a further crackdown on Islamic militants by Musharraf – even if he were willing and able to implement such a strategy – is unlikely to be enough to assuage the retaliatory impulse. The US should therefore accept that India will respond militarily, but seek to minimise the magnitude of that response, influence the manner in which it is carried out, and thereby minimise the resultant fallout.
Air strikes would provide the visible yet proportionate response required, and could be plausibly claimed to be targeted at the perpetrators of the attack. Unlike an invasion, they would provide insufficient grounds for a nuclear Pakistani response, though intense diplomatic efforts would be required to secure Musharraf’s acquiescence, and agreement not to escalate the conflict.

*It is plausible, however, to suppose that his acquiescence could be obtained.* He will recognise that a substantial Indian response is inevitable, and may be relieved not to be facing full invasion. Moreover, the groups on the receiving end of air strikes would not be the Pakistani army, but Islamic fundamentalist groups that pose a threat to Pakistan’s stability and to Musharraf’s own power base. He may in fact see this as a politically acceptable way to rid himself of them.

Accepting Indian air strikes will undermine Musharraf’s political position, but:

1. *This is an unavoidable consequence of any acceptable course of action.* Following the attack, any scenario short of all-out war requires significant concessions from Pakistan.
2. *It is unlikely to result in his downfall, in the near term at least.* Power in Pakistan resides not with public opinion but with the military, and for them accepting limited air strikes against terrorist camps is preferable to facing a large scale Indian invasion or initiating nuclear war.
3. Even in terms of popular support, Musharraf might be better off in a scenario in which it is the Indian army rooting out the Islamic extremists than in one (e.g. Option 1) in which he himself was forced to take them on.
4. Long term, $2bn in US aid will improve economic conditions and reduce popular discontent.

**Implementation:** Dispatch high level envoy to region immediately

*Make clear to Vajpayee that:*
- Invasion would result in international isolation, immediate imposition of sanctions and, very likely, a nuclear response from Pakistan
- A pre-emptive attack on Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities would be very unlikely to succeed and would provoke immediate retaliation
- Limited air strikes would be acceptable, but must be accompanied by announcement of their limited nature
- The US will exert strong pressure on Pakistan to crackdown on terrorists

*Make clear to Musharraf that:*
- India will respond militarily, and choice is between accepting air strikes and facing invasion
- Air strikes will be limited and are not the precursor to an invasion
- A pre-emptive attack on India’s nuclear capabilities would be very unlikely to succeed and would provoke immediate retaliation
- He must accelerate crackdown on terrorist groups, and in return will receive $2bn in US aid (in addition to the $1bn already pledged)

**In longer term:**
- Steps to reduce risk of war: E.g. Offer to provide both countries with information on origin of missile launches or nuclear detonations triggered by accident or bad intelligence
- Pressure both sides not to deploy operational nuclear weapons
- Push India to develop dialogue with Kashmiri leaders, rectify some of the legitimate grievances of Kashmir’s Muslims and grant greater regional autonomy
- Direct funding for Pakistan’s education system to reduce influence of madrassas
- Continued aid to stimulate economic growth and stabilise Musharraf regime
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: NSC STAFFER 905753330
FROM: NSC STAFFER 905753330
DATE: JUNE 11, 2003
RE: PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR IN THE MOST DANGEROUS REGION

ISSUE: India and Pakistan appear once again on the brink of nuclear war. We must determine quickly what form of intervention is most likely to diffuse the crisis without further destabilizing the domestic politics of either country. Our policy decisions will have long-term implications as we set the rules in the post-Iraq, post-UN world order.

US NATIONAL INTERESTS: Immediate intervention in the India-Pakistan crisis is critical because US national interests are at stake. In order of descending importance, they are in:
- Preventing, deterring, and reducing of the threat of globally destabilizing nuclear weapons use. (Vital)
- Ensuring adequate nuclear custodial security and safety measures in order to prevent accidental use or acquisition by terrorists. (Vital)
- Suppressing regional and international terrorism. (Extremely important)
- Managing a major conflict in an important geographic region. (Extremely important)
- Promoting the well-being and maintaining our relationship with two US allies. (Extremely important)

OBJECTIVES: Our success in this intervention will be measured by our ability to:
- Dissuade India and Pakistan from resorting to nuclear weapons in the current crisis.
- Prevent nuclear theft and unauthorized or inadvertent use.
- Avoid provoking a chain reaction of ethno-religious turmoil in either country.
- Stabilize the relationship between the two countries and contain the Kashmir conflict.

DISCUSSION: We must take the threat of nuclear war seriously. India is thought to have about 40 operational warheads and Pakistan 20, deliverable to each other’s major cities with anywhere from two hours to eight minutes warning. The Pentagon estimates that a nuclear exchange could instantly kill 12 million people and injure 7 million more.

India claims it will not use nuclear weapons first. But Pakistan has made no such disclaimers. And, even more worrisome is the potential for unauthorized or accidental use. As both states disperse their nuclear arsenals, mating warheads with delivery systems and placing them on hair-trigger alert, the risk increases that non-state actors, including anti-US terrorists, may gain access. Furthermore, with 1 million troops facing off across the Line of Control, India and Pakistan could stumble into nuclear exchange because of misinterpretation or miscalculation – trademarks of the wars and innumerable crises since the two became independent states.

The US, however, is in a strong position as it enters this crisis. After the “short, glorious” victory in Iraq and successful resolution of the confrontation with North Korea – both without the help of the UN – we are ready to define our role as the benevolent superpower of the new world order. Furthermore, our newly revived economic and military relations with both India and Pakistan have enabled us to act in roles such as honest messenger or impartial broker.
That said, room for maneuver is slim. Prime Minister Vajpayee is reluctant to offer concessions or even acknowledge that Kashmir is disputed territory for fear of prompting religious secessionism in India's other states. But President Musharraf's political position is tenuous and not likely to withstand a crackdown on insurgents if it does not come with concessions from India. A collapse of Pakistan - into internal anarchy or an Islamic revolution - would cripple the global campaign against terrorism.

Our response to this crisis must be quick and determined. India could conduct air strikes against terrorist camps in Pakistan anytime within the next 10 days. It also appears ready to send in troops within two days. Either approach would make the likelihood of nuclear retaliation high.

THE OPTIONS

Option 1: Shuttle diplomacy.
This option resembles that used by US diplomats during last year's crisis. Our main roles would involve serving as a conduit between each side, promoting information sharing and confidence building, and exerting limited pressure. We would want to urge Pakistan to stop the infiltration of insurgents and arms into the India-controlled portion of Kashmir and to begin the dismantling of existing training camps - in line with its proclaimed stance on terrorism. In exchange, we would want to encourage India to begin pulling troops back from the border. To increase confidence, we could provide intelligence data confirming that commitments are being met and reassuring that there will be no surprise attack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Has a proven track record.</td>
<td>• Might not be enough to diffuse the crisis in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited involvement avoids the trap of favoring one side over the other.</td>
<td>• Does little to support Musharraf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goes some ways toward preventing misinterpretation and miscalculation.</td>
<td>• Does little to increase nuclear security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Requires little in the way of US resources.</td>
<td>• Fails to address deep-seated issues surrounding Kashmir.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Option 2: Crisis Management.
This option would be a variant of shuttle diplomacy but with a lot more stick and a little more carrot. To change India and Pakistan's cost-benefit analysis on weaponization, we would warn both states that nuclear weapons deployment would result in stringent unilateral diplomatic and fiscal sanctions. We would also threaten air strikes to stop any military force that tries to cross the border. Both countries would have to meet strict deadlines for concessions and confidence-building measures. Compliance would mean monetary aid and oil jobs in US-controlled Iraq. It would also mean technology to prevent accidental or unauthorized nuclear use or theft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hard line means greater control of outcome and timing.</td>
<td>• Commits moderate US resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goes some ways toward increasing weapons security.</td>
<td>• Again, does little to support Musharraf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Again, fails to address deep-seated issues surrounding Kashmir.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option 3: Conflict Mitigation.
This option, unlike the short-term shuttle diplomacy or crisis management, would require the US to play a sustained, proactive role in the conflict over Kashmir. Although India rejects international mediation, the US would need to emphasize that a recurring risk of nuclear war goes beyond the confines of an internal problem. And if Vajpayee and Musharraf continue to refuse to shake hands or look at each other, international mediation is the only way to initiate necessary dialogue. This option would incorporate the crisis diffusing steps of the previous two, but would require additional confidence-building measures and a commitment to negotiations over the future of Kashmir.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gets to the heart of the conflict and may prevent a repeat of the crisis.</td>
<td>• Least likely to be accepted by India, which will play the “war on terror card.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Removes the rationale for terrorism.</td>
<td>• Commits extensive US resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most likely to salvage Musharraf’s political position.</td>
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</table>

RECOMMENDATION: Conflict Mitigation.
The world cannot afford to have nuclear crisis in South Asia become a routine spring exercise. In our role as the benevolent superpower, we have an obligation to use our leverage to resolve both the current crisis and the ongoing conflict. We have to hope that India and Pakistan will cooperate out of self-interest and a desire to solidify their relationship with the US.

IMPLEMENTATION
• Get Secretary Powell on the phone to Vajpayee ASAP to ask for time to let US diplomacy work.
• Send Secretary Rumsfeld to Islamabad immediately to seek a halt on infiltration and a public condemnation of terrorism from Musharraf. Deadline: June 14.
• Send Rumsfeld to New Delhi to seek a corresponding concession from Vajpayee (ie. withdrawal of navy vessels from Pakistani coast). Deadline: June 16.
• Pakistan will have one week to demonstrate that it has cut off support for militants in Kashmir and begun to dismantle training camps and staging areas. US intelligence will monitor. Deadline: June 23.
• India will have one week to demonstrate that it has begun to pull back troops from the border and called off air strikes. US intelligence will monitor. Deadline: June 30.
• Pakistan will have two months to demonstrate that it continues to control infiltration and has begun to rein in the madrassas. The US will provide both countries with technology to prevent unauthorized nuclear use or threat. Deadline: August 30.
• If all conditions are met, Vajpayee and Musharraf will be “invited” to Camp David for a summit based on the framework agreed to in previous bilateral discussions. The US will offer $1 billion-aid packages to both countries. Date: September 15.

FALL BACK
If the conflict mitigation route stalls, proceed with conflict management to get beyond the crisis. Reserve negotiations for a calmer moment. Support Musharraf's position with increased aid and a reinstatement of army training programs.
**ISSUE:** Leverage US power preventing Kashmiri crisis escalation (including avoiding NW use).

**INTERESTS:** Vital (i) Prevent or reduce threat of NW usage in S. Asia; Extremely Important (ii) prevent emergence of regional hegemon (i.e., India or China); (iii) suppress Islamist-related terrorism.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Threat Magnitude</th>
<th>Impact Magnitude</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Low-level LOC skirmish</td>
<td>LOW - low threat since limited to LOC.</td>
<td>HIGH [30%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Limited Indian air-strike</td>
<td>INTERMEDIATE - impacts on (ii) &amp; (iii) above.</td>
<td>HIGH [35%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against 7 terrorist camps</td>
<td>Attacks in Pakistan may provoke Pakistani response. Pakistani failure to respond might lead to coup against Musharraf.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Limited Indian invasion to</td>
<td>HIGH - as Musharraf may be toppled &amp; Pakistan may respond with NW, impacts on (ii) and (iii) above.</td>
<td>LOW [5%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘partition’ Pakistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pakistani surprise strike</td>
<td>VERY HIGH - if ISI fails to identify all Indian NW, India may respond with NW strikes impacting (i) and (ii).</td>
<td>MEDIUM [10%]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>against suspected Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Indian surprise strike</td>
<td>VERY HIGH - US intelligence suggests that Pakistan has recently moved its weapons. So, if Indian intelligence is wrong, Pakistan could respond with full force of its arsenal impacting on (i).</td>
<td>MEDIUM [20%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against suspected Pakistani NW sites</td>
<td>India has fewer NWs to hit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>6 Pakistani NW ‘first strike’</td>
<td>VERY HIGH - will provoke full Indian NW response, impacting on (i) and (ii).</td>
<td>LOW [1%]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Indian NW ‘first strike’</td>
<td>VERH HIGH - if NWs remain operable, Pakistani response will be full use of NW. Impacting on (i).</td>
<td>LOW [1%]</td>
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**OPPORTUNITIES:** (a) Long-term opportunity to engage India/Pakistan in international non-proliferation regime; (b) Secure enhanced NW stability in India/Pakistan through limited technical assistance; (c) Bolster ‘War on Terrorism’ by reducing operational presence of Islamist-related terrorists in South Asia.

**OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE:** Ensure crisis does not escalate beyond level 1 or modified level 2 (i.e., excluding Indian strikes on Pakistani territory) above.

**STRATEGIES FOR US INVOLVEMENT:** (1) ‘Multi-Party Parallel Deterrence’ – Escalation risk derives from both India (re: levels 2, 3, 5 and 7) and Pakistan (re: 4, 6). Therefore, US and allies (i.e., China and Japan) must undertake parallel private discussions creating mix of incentives (e.g., covert conventional military aid packages through allies such as UK or Russia) and disincentives (e.g., threaten renewal of Glenn Amendment and other sanctions; amortization of loans etc; adverse consequences on India’s international status) to reward/punish escalation. **Pros:** Pakistan dependent on economic aid; India protective of international status. Private pressure avoids Indian ire at public 3rd party involvement. **Cons:** Can US coordinate allies (n.b. China’s conflicting regional interests)? (2) ‘Final Solution’ – US air-strikes against both Pakistan and Indian NWs. **Pros:** Would remove immediate nuclear uncertainty; **Cons:** Might fail to hit all NWs; may trigger Indo-Pak conventional war; risks creating China as Asian NW hegemon; US subject to considerable criticism.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Short-term: Strategy 1 (‘Multi-Party Parallel Deterrence’); Long-term: Engage India and Pakistan in ‘replica’ regional NPT (i.e., so as not to ‘undermine’ actual NPT).
Appendix

The author of the advice to Dr. Rice should request the following information:

1. Confirmation as to the likelihood of a coup against President Musharraf and the identity of the probable conspirators.

2. CIA’s assessment as to the credibility of the Indian claim that the ISI was involved with the Jaish-e-Muhammad attack against the Kashmir legislative assembly. In particular, if the claim appears credible, request information on the extent of collaboration (i.e. was it rogue ISI operatives or was the assistance more ‘institutional’?).

3. Identification of suitable incentives and disincentives for India and Pakistan – e.g. which economic aid programs does Pakistan heavily rely on?

4. Extent to which US will be able to coordinate private multi-party deterrence discussions.