

Defending against Anarchy: From War to Peacekeeping in Afghanistan

The United States faces one overwhelming threat to its national security today: anarchy abroad. In lands where authority rests with whoever wins the latest battle and where outsiders come and go without any records kept, terrorists have an easier time concealing their presence and plotting their attacks. To maintain basic security throughout their countries, newly established governments in unstable societies need outside support so that their people can go about their daily business without fear of civil unrest.

Keeping anarchy at bay requires well-armed and well-planned peacekeeping operations as a sign from the international community that the world is watching and ready to intervene—with force if necessary—to ensure stability. Robust peacekeeping operations permit humanitarian aid to get where it is needed, allow economies to start functioning again without constant disruption, and give new governments the time they need to gain the confidence of the people. When the international community as a whole—not just a few outside supporters acting independently—endorses such a peacekeeping operation, new governments gain legitimacy and cement their authority more easily. They appear less beholden to particular foreign countries and less driven by particular foreign interests.

If anarchy reemerges in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda already has an established base of supporters there who might assist the terrorists again. In the 1990s, Afghanistan's failure as a state—where warlords roamed at will and anonymous foreigners slipped easily across borders—allowed Al Qaeda to flourish. Unfortunately, if Washington does not reevaluate its current approach, Afghanistan's postwar stability might prove short lived. To win the peace,

Kimberly Zisk Marten is an associate professor of political science at Barnard College, Columbia University, and associate director of Columbia's Harriman Institute.

Copyright © 2002 by The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
The Washington Quarterly • 26:1 pp. 35–52.

the United States must broaden its current definition of essential military tasks to include activities other than deterring and fighting wars.

In the interest of U.S. security, Washington needs to muster the political will to lead a serious, nationwide peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan. Success can improve U.S. security well beyond that country, serving as a model for peacekeeping operations to address the threat posed by Al Qaeda worldwide. In particular, successful peacekeeping in Afghanistan can improve the chances that any U.S.-led military action to topple Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq will improve U.S., regional, and global security. If Washington is not prepared to lead an effective postconflict peacekeeping operation in Iraq, Al Qaeda might use popular Iraqi unrest to gain access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) during the anarchy that might follow Saddam's expulsion. Examining what peacekeeping should entail in Afghanistan can provide a template to improve stability after operations in Iraq or elsewhere.

Setting the Stage in Afghanistan

Throughout the past year, policymakers in Washington and at the United Nations (UN) have debated about the participants, practices, and purpose of an ongoing peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan. In December 2001, the UN Security Council authorized a small but well-armed peacekeeping mission—the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—to be deployed in Kabul and the immediate surrounding areas to provide security for the interim Afghan government and UN agencies operating in the city.¹ Great Britain commanded the mission for the first six months; leadership was transferred to Turkey in June 2002.

The U.S. government's attitude toward this operation reflects the current Bush administration's ambivalence toward peacekeeping operations in general. On one hand, administration officials know that peacekeeping forces have to be well armed and well equipped to take the necessary action in volatile situations to be effective. Through its permanent seat on the UN Security Council, the United States therefore ensured that the ISAF received a strong and flexible mandate and that those states selected to lead the mission had powerful, well-trained military forces.

On the other hand, these officials want to keep U.S. forces as far from the actual peacekeeping process as possible so that resources can be used on military matters considered more vital to U.S. national security. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and other administration officials have repeatedly said that the technological superiority of U.S. forces is best suited to fighting and winning wars, not participating in "nonmilitary" activities such as peacekeeping, which they feel anyone could do.²

U.S. government officials also want to maintain U.S. military flexibility to operate in Afghanistan with minimal non-U.S. interference. The administration limited ISAF operations to Kabul, where the force is removed from immediate contact with the ongoing U.S. war effort and staffed by personnel from other nations. U.S. forces provide logistical, communications, and intelligence support to the mission; are willing to act as a rapid-reaction force to rescue the ISAF if it is attacked; and have helped the current Turkish leaders of the operation raise money to cover expenses.³ The United States has refused, however, to take the lead role.

Pressure to expand ISAF's deployment beyond the capital city has grown over time. Afghan president Hamid Karzai; UN Secretary General Kofi Annan; Annan's special representative to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi; and a wide variety of nongovernmental aid organizations have all called for a larger operation that would protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country and deter fighting among regional warlords. In May 2002, a bipartisan coalition within the U.S. House of Representatives, led by Democrat Tom Lantos (CA), passed a bill suggesting that the Bush administration rethink its position on peacekeeping in Afghanistan and assume a greater role in bringing security to the country as a whole.⁴ Several other Democrats, including Sen. Barbara Boxer (CA), have also adamantly advocated that the United States commit greater resources to a nationwide peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan.

By early September 2002, leading Bush administration officials were apparently ready to support the notion of expanding the ISAF mission beyond Kabul, even though they still did not want U.S. personnel involved.⁵ A few weeks later, however, the administration withdrew its support for broadening the scope of the operation—no matter who led it. The Department of State delivered a report to Congress concluding that Afghanistan's difficult geography and poor infrastructure made an expanded operation too unwieldy to contemplate.⁶ The report also raised once again the argument made by the Pentagon throughout the fall of 2001 that peacekeeping operations might interfere with war-fighting plans, complicating the effort to achieve core U.S. security goals in the country. A deeper examination of what kind of peacekeeping force is needed in Afghanistan and how this operation would best function, however, alleviates the concerns raised in the State Department's report.

Success can serve as a model for peacekeeping to address the Al Qaeda threat worldwide.

From Fighting the War to Keeping the Peace

The war effort in Afghanistan has been winding down in recent months, with U.S. and coalition forces more focused on scattered mopping-up operations than major battles. That procedural shift does not imply, however, stability in the region. U.S. forces continue to face firefights and attacks from remnant Taliban forces. Most of the rebels have simply fled over the border to Pakistan (with some going to Iran),⁷ and in many places, the border remains so poorly guarded and porous that they can easily move back and forth into Afghanistan. Meanwhile, battles between regional warlords are

raging in many corners of the country, and bandits prevent humanitarian aid convoys from traveling outside a few major cities. There may be no real war in Afghanistan at present, but there is no peace either.

All sides in the debate over peacekeeping agree that Afghanistan must be responsible for its own security in the long run. Ensuring the future stability of the country requires leaving behind well-

functioning national security institutions under the direction of a strong central government. Capable security institutions—military and police forces as well as border guards—will hinder terrorists trying to enter the country and dissuade any who do cross the border from trying to reestablish training bases there. Washington and its allies are working to prepare and equip these new security institutions, devoting both money and U.S. Special Forces personnel to the training effort.

The disagreement, though, concerns what to do next. The most optimistic scenarios estimate that the new security institutions will not be fully staffed until mid-2004, and the interim plans, until the training program is complete, are questionable. Bush administration officials argue that training Afghan forces is an alternative to large-scale peacekeeping. Rumsfeld, in particular, has said that placing Afghanistan in a position to care for itself is preferable to leaving it dependent on outsiders for its security. In February 2002, he argued that a resource trade-off was involved: “Should we spend the time and money and effort in training now to expand the international security force, which ultimately will leave and create an unstable situation when they leave, unless there’s something to take their place? Or should the time and money and effort and training be spent now to create that national army?”⁸ Yet, if Afghanistan’s stability continues to deteriorate over the next two years as it has over the past few months, the opportunity for those institutions to accomplish much may have passed, particularly if Karzai cannot establish his government’s authority among the broader population.

**Blanket
coverage is not
needed...**

The Afghan people, who for decades have approached the notion of a central government with distrust and fear, will need to be convinced that the new government's security forces are capable of serving their interests. Otherwise, high-quality recruits will not join the forces, and agitators will easily buy off or threaten those who do enlist. Establishing trust in the new forces will take time, especially since Afghanistan's regional warlords are reportedly still forbidding their best men to join the new organization. The warlords fear that the success of the new forces will threaten the warlords' control.

Meanwhile, much of Afghanistan is sinking once again into the miasma that followed the 1989 withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces. Economic recovery is impossible when markets cannot function safely. Caches of heavy arms litter the countryside. Assassination attempts are common, with two succeeding in killing members of the interim government. Corruption is endemic among the existing police and border guards, making extortion a normal cost of both trade and aid delivery. International humanitarian aid cannot pass through to areas where it is needed most because of banditry and political violence. Creating new security institutions that will be fully operational only after several years' time is not an adequate response to these dangers. To get itself on its feet and prove itself to its population, the central government needs security support throughout the country now, not later.

Those who believe that the peacekeeping force should be expanded agree on the numbers needed: several tens of thousands of well-armed and well-trained troops from a variety of countries, stationed throughout Afghanistan and authorized to use force when necessary to prevent attacks on aid convoys, to seize arms caches, and to deter warlords from attacking both the central government and the international community.⁹ Well-defended garrisons, staffed by a few thousand troops each, could be placed in major Afghan cities. Regular, well-armed foot soldiers could patrol daily from these garrisons into heavily populated areas, while random, periodic armored-vehicle patrols travel throughout the surrounding accessible countryside.

The State Department is correct in noting that some Afghan mountain and desert regions are simply inaccessible to regular patrolling, but blanket coverage is not needed. Covering every square mile of Afghan territory would not be the goal; neither would maintaining everyday law and order among the population. Instead, the peacekeepers' primary purpose would be

**...Expanded
peacekeeping would
establish what
military planners call
presence.**

to establish what military planners call presence—the simple reminder that the international community is monitoring developments throughout Afghanistan and has the political will to take military action on behalf of international goals if necessary.

The military component of an expanded peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan could thus be significantly smaller compared to other recent missions, for example, the initial large-scale deployments of NATO peacekeepers to either Bosnia or Kosovo, because the operation in Afghanistan would not face the same major challenge that those Balkan operations did. Unlike the

various groups fighting in the Balkans, Afghans lack a long history of ethnic hatred. Despite clashes between rival warlords who represent different ethnic groups, no ethnic cleansing has occurred in Afghanistan, nor is there a popular sense of ethnic entitlement to particular landmarks or pieces of religiously significant territory. Therefore, soldiers would not have to assume the kind of riot-police or mosque-guard duties that drained resources in the Balkans. Afghanistan

does not face the threat of widespread property destruction or retribitional killing based on ethnic intolerance, but the threat of anarchy in Afghanistan is real.

With the deployment of a nationwide force, stationed to protect the areas of greatest unrest, Afghanistan's regional warlords would likely restrain themselves as well. Any banditry problems remaining after expanding the peacekeeping mission would probably occur on a small scale by poorly armed people. Given all the opportunities for targeted developmental assistance that the international community has at its disposal—for example, the kind used in Bosnia to reward cooperation with the UN—well-armed warlords eager to establish gubernatorial authority among their populations would be unlikely to risk foreign donors' wrath by launching raids against them.

The strongest Afghan warlords have great political ambitions for permanent control of vast regions, as well as long-standing ties to the outside world from their fight against Soviet occupation in the 1980s. For this reason, they are unlikely to jeopardize their prospects by violently challenging the UN once it announces its approval of a nationwide peacekeeping mandate. Instead, the warlords will adopt the political attitudes (in U.S. terms) of big-city machine bosses, working with the international community for the sake of the long-term aid booty they can then distribute to their supporters. Simple use of the peacekeeping force's front and rear armed guard

Without U.S. leadership, a larger peacekeeping force for Afghanistan will not be formed.

vehicles would probably adequately protect civilian humanitarian aid convoys traveling through unstable areas from roadside bandits most of the time.

Of course, an expanded peacekeeping operation would run substantial risks. Peacekeepers anywhere in the world could be targeted by so-called spoilers, whose personal political fortunes benefit from instability and war.¹⁰ In Afghanistan, peacekeepers also face the constant threat of terrorist attacks, as the small ISAF force in Kabul has already learned, but U.S. troops still fighting pockets of Taliban resistance are finding that most of the population welcomes the troops because of the stability and humanitarian aid they bring. Washington has accepted the risks associated with their deployment, and an operation officially designated as peacekeeping would be no riskier.

The administration is reluctant to make U.S. peacekeeping official, but U.S. Special Forces are already carrying out various kinds of peacekeeping activities in scattered local areas throughout the Afghan countryside. From almost the very start of the war, U.S. soldiers have been performing humanitarian needs assessments in Afghan villages and coordinating the delivery of aid. This effort was enhanced in March 2002 so that by July U.S. forces had completed dozens of major humanitarian projects.¹¹ These forces have intervened to negotiate between warring factions, mingled with the population to gain intelligence about political violence, seized hoards of weapons, started training a new national army, and guarded Karzai. Apparently, the troops are even accompanying U.S. Agency for International Development officials, providing them with security as they travel outside major Afghan cities.¹² All these activities bear a much greater resemblance to peacekeeping operations than to traditional war fighting.

Unfortunately, too few soldiers are involved in these operations in a country that is too big. The limited scale of these actions remains insufficient to bring stability to the entire Afghan state. U.S. and allied efforts cannot sustain the pockets of hope that have emerged in the country, let alone extend them into the numerous untouched regions, if the national economy remains shattered or the central government falls apart. A greater operation is required.

Leading by Example

The past decade has shown that chances for success in complex peacekeeping operations increase dramatically when a strong state or coalition with well-armed, well-trained troops and staying power takes the lead. The lead state or coalition must demonstrate to potential spoilers that the peacekeep-

ers will not leave when the going gets tough but instead will employ whatever force is necessary to defend the mission. The Australians brought this concept to East Timor, the British brought it to Sierra Leone, and NATO is bringing it now to Bosnia and Kosovo. Because the United States has been the primary victim of Al Qaeda's Afghan training camps and remains the most likely target of future large-scale terrorist attacks, the United States has the strongest reason to stay in Afghanistan and see peacekeeping through.

Without U.S. leadership, a larger peacekeeping force for Afghanistan will not be formed. Rumsfeld has argued that, because no other country has volunteered its own military troops for peacekeeping duties outside

Kabul, the United States cannot do much about the fact that the mission has not expanded.¹³

Yet, events over the years have demonstrated that U.S. leadership, and even prodding, is often crucial to convincing others to act. The United States had to pressure Western Europe strongly to get a robust NATO peacekeeping force formed in Bosnia in 1995, even though European security was at stake as refugees poured in from the Balkans and the fighting

threatened to spread. Later, U.S. leadership enabled the formation of a cohesive peacekeeping force for Kosovo in 1999. Certainly in Afghanistan—where the U.S. military command had initially opposed expanding the peacekeeping force out of fear that it would infringe on U.S. and coalition forces still fighting Taliban remnants—it will take U.S. leadership to produce a larger operation.

The United States cannot stand back and urge others to donate troops to the mission if the U.S. government does not do the same. Leadership requires participation, but the U.S. troop contribution to an expanded peacekeeping mission need not be very large. Demonstrating strong political will does not necessarily come from the size of the national deployment. The major U.S. forces assigned to the mission could remain relatively limited and still significantly contribute to the operation's success by performing the support duties they have done well elsewhere: airlifting troops and supplies, providing secure communication capabilities and logistics, and performing the civil affairs work that helps secure the support of the local population, for example, by using military engineers to rebuild basic infrastructure or army medics to run health clinics. Policymakers could entrust many of these tasks to U.S. Army reserves so that elite U.S. combat troops could continue to train for whatever contingencies they are likely to face elsewhere.

Peacekeeping authorized by the United Nations is not imperialistic.

Most important, however, the United States should send troops who demonstrate the resolve to stay as long as necessary. The nation must understand, therefore, that casualties might result and that casualties might be the price to pay to protect the United States from the threat of Afghan anarchy. Decisionmakers should assure U.S. military commanders that their careers would not suffer if they lost soldiers in an Afghan peacekeeping mission in the course of duty. In recent peace operations in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti, U.S. officers have often been encouraged to prioritize force protection issues—in other words, ensuring the safety of their own troops—over accomplishing the mission at hand.¹⁴ Stability in Afghanistan is too important to U.S. national security interests to allow casualty avoidance to trump mission goals. Given the huge outpouring of patriotism since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the message that casualties might be the price of success is one that political leaders should be able to communicate clearly to the American people.

Far more important than its troop contributions would be the U.S. role in creating and then commanding the mission. With Washington's strong support for an expanded peacekeeping operation, the mission will have the political staying power necessary for success. If U.S. support remains lukewarm at best, the UN Security Council cannot assemble such a force. Those who wish to benefit from instability's return to Afghanistan may seek to manipulate the U.S. government's hesitancy, perhaps launching a war of attrition against the operation in the hope that the international community would tire and leave. Leaders must clearly communicate that an expanded peacekeeping mission is vital for U.S. security interests and that the United States will stay the course.

Moreover, U.S. command of a mission authorized by the UN Security Council can ensure that peacekeeping does not interfere with U.S. military operations in the country. By contributing to the careful crafting of the mission's legal mandate as well as its operational rules of engagement, the United States can provide assurances that the mission will succeed while maintaining the autonomy of its military mop-up operations elsewhere. If U.S. forces commanded an expanded ISAF operation, military and peacekeeping operations could also safely share intelligence at the discretion of the U.S. government.

If the United States leads a Security Council–authorized mission, then according to UN protocol the U.S. government appoints the mission commander and has both the responsibility and the right to choose other mission participants. Convincing the combination of states chosen by Washington to join the undertaking would require a sustained diplomatic lobbying effort. The United States would need to bring its allies—NATO members and

especially Islamic countries whose governments are friendly to the United States, such as Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia (each of which has a great deal of peacekeeping experience)—on board. Jordan is already working with the United States in Afghanistan in a humanitarian capacity, and both Jordan and Malaysia volunteered troops (which were ultimately refused) for the original British-led peacekeeping mission in Kabul. Presumably, the task of gaining the support of these countries would be straightforward. The United States would also need to convince Russia and China not to veto the mission in the Security Council—a much easier task today because of their shared concerns about terrorism emanating from Central Asia.

Ultimately, U.S. command would allow Washington to ensure that participants are well suited for their assigned, specific missions. Even though the rules of engagement and the areas of force deployment would be subject to negotiation among all participants, Washington could set the agenda and coordinate the discussion. The United States might learn from Australia's experience in the INTERFET peacekeeping mission in East Timor in 1999, where Australia acted as the lead state in the UN-authorized operation. Canberra's ability in effect to choose its partners and coordinate their actions was one of the major reasons that peacekeeping in East Timor had a good beginning.¹⁵ The result was a genuine multinational force that the world community highly respected and that remained under firm Australian guidance. U.S. military forces played supporting roles in INTERFET, and U.S. commanders could apply knowledge acquired there to design an effective operation for Afghanistan.

Allies Can't Lead This One

Some analysts have argued that the United States should relinquish leadership of future peacekeeping operations to regional allies rather than head the missions itself, as happened in East Timor when Washington clearly indicated to Canberra that it supported Australia taking the lead.¹⁶ Although that possibility might be successful for contingencies elsewhere in the world, it does not apply in Afghanistan. In light of the September 11 attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom, no other country can muster the necessary military forces, economic resources, and political will to lead an expanded peacekeeping operation there.

Great Britain, probably the strongest U.S. ally with interests in the region, not only led the initial deployment of the Kabul-based peacekeeping force in early 2002 but also sent troops simultaneously to fight alongside U.S. forces against the Taliban. The general sense in London now is that

Great Britain lacks both the budget and the personnel to play a leadership role in a new mission, especially given the country's recent huge peacekeeping roles in Sierra Leone and the Balkans. Certainly, London should be encouraged to make some kind of a contribution to an expanded force, but expecting Great Britain to take charge is not politically reasonable.

As Great Britain's successor as head of the ISAF mission, Turkey has also emerged as a potential alternative leader of an expanded peacekeeping mission. Turkey has an Islamic population with a secular, largely democratic government, leading some to consider the country a model for political development in Afghanistan and elsewhere in Central Asia and the Middle East.¹⁷ Because Turkey has historically given military and humanitarian assistance to the country, Ankara has long-standing contacts in Afghanistan. Turkey also has a high degree of interoperability with U.S. forces because of its NATO membership, which would make coordinating Turkish efforts with the ongoing U.S. military campaign significantly easier. Members of the U.S. defense policy community would like to push the Turkish military to play a more prominent role in Central Asian security issues. Washington believes that giving Turkish officers the opportunity to undertake a highly visible role that contributes to regional stability will both cement their professionalism as an organization and improve the bad reputation they have garnered because of their poor human rights record in fighting Kurdish terrorism at home.

Turkey's command of the ISAF force in Kabul has already demonstrated Turkish military capability, but the Turkish government is unstable and confronted by a parliament tired of the country's continuing economic malaise. Turkey struggles with high debt and a lack of investor confidence, and the government relies on international assistance for its continuing economic viability. Meanwhile, Turkish moderates are preoccupied with containing the political power of their own domestic Islamic fundamentalists, who want to overturn the secular legacy of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey.

Having already endured three military coups in the past 40-odd years, Turkey's political and economic future is too uncertain to ask Ankara to lead major peacekeeping missions abroad. Turkish troops should certainly continue to participate in bringing peace to their Afghan neighbors, but they lack the capacity at this moment to lead any operation intended to demonstrate that the international community has the capability and will to bring stability to Afghanistan.

Experimentation with peacekeeping design has made the world a more secure place.

Germany and the Netherlands have recently offered to assume joint command of the mission in Kabul when the Turkish term expires in December. German and Dutch forces have performed well in recent NATO peacekeeping roles in the Balkans, and once again, the close working relationship with U.S. forces makes interoperability easy. Germany has also been especially active in political reform and humanitarian aid efforts in Afghanistan, at least in part because it has sheltered so many Afghan refugees in recent years. Like London, though, Berlin is already playing a large peacekeeping role in the Balkans, and German forces are stretched thin under a military budget that is one of the lowest among NATO countries.

There are no reasonable alternatives to U.S. leadership of an expanded peacekeeping mission. No other strong, democratic state has either the military muscle or diplomatic resources necessary to take command. At any rate, as Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage highlighted in June 2002, most Afghans are not concerned with the niceties of role divisions; they already associate the peacekeeping force in Kabul with the United States.¹⁸ The United States has been the primary external victim of Afghan instability thus far, and the strong U.S. interest in restoring calm there leaves the United States the most logical choice for leading an expanded peacekeeping effort.

Peacekeeping Is Not Imperialism

For the most part, Afghans have not expressed fear about U.S. intentions in their country. Instead, U.S. defense officials are leery of having U.S. troops seen as an occupation force. In the words of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, “We have been very mindful of [the] historical Afghan animosity to foreign armies and foreign occupiers. ... We have made it clear, and we need to continue to do so, [that] we have no intent of colonizing Afghanistan.”¹⁹

Leading a multinational force under UN authorization would be the best demonstration that U.S. intentions are not, in fact, colonial. Imperialism has historically been grounded in competition between great powers for influence over particular pieces of territory for the sake of zero-sum commercial gain. Afghanistan remembers its own experience of imperialism during the “great game” a century ago when Great Britain and Russia vied for control of the region and its resources.²⁰

UN-authorized peacekeeping is not imperialistic. By definition, the effort is multilateral and involves a great deal of international negotiation and cooperation for the sake of achieving common security goals. If the United States led a UN-authorized mission, the U.S. government would have con-

trol over the mission's design but would be expected to report back to the UN secretary general and the Security Council about the conduct and achievements of the operation. Rather than competing against Russia or China or Great Britain for influence in South Central Asia, the United States would be working with the established international community on behalf of a shared interest.

The Bush administration has often been reluctant to commit to multilateral solutions to security problems. Government officials have expressed an underlying sense that the United States needs to preserve its freedom of maneuver. Nevertheless, peacekeeping is too big a job for U.S. forces alone and too important a job to be left undone. A multilateral force, especially one that includes Islamic countries, would also be safer than deployment of U.S. troops alone.

Such a force would be less likely to face the threat of popular jihad against imperial outsiders—a threat that was carried out against British and Russian occupiers in the past.

The multilateral character of peacekeeping operations in places ranging from Bosnia and Kosovo to East Timor has given them legitimacy in the eyes of both the international community and most players on the ground. Individual actors who oppose either the peace process itself or the liberal political institutions the UN has tried to build in these locations have frequently called peacekeepers “imperialists.” Yet, making that accusation stick is difficult when so many countries with such distinct economic and security interests are involved. The long-term U.S. goal in Afghanistan is to build popular support for a central government that U.S. officials helped to create. The greater the range and number of countries that support that government, the less the world and the Afghan people will perceive it as a U.S. puppet.

An expanded peacekeeping force might get out of Afghanistan within two years.

Wanted: New Precedents to Combat Transnational Threats

U.S. leadership of an expanded mission would mark the first time in history that one nation commanded both a multilateral peacekeeping operation and a military effort inside a country simultaneously. Because peacekeeping has traditionally been an activity carried out by impartial parties, the notion of the United States playing both roles will inevitably distress some members of the international community. Yet, clearly no one else is ready to step forth to lead an expanded mission in Afghanistan. If the United States does not

lead, simply nothing will be done. The absence of precedent should not be an argument to avoid innovation.

Only in the last 10 years has the international community considered sending heavily armed peacekeepers into dangerous situations acceptable. Previously, troops lightly armed for self-defense, if armed at all, and led by officers from disinterested nations under broad UN command carried out most operations. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the attendant bipolarity finally enabled the UN regularly to authorize peacekeeping missions commanded by a single state or alliance.

In the 1990s, however, the United States led a UN-authorized mission in Haiti, Australia led one in East Timor, and NATO continues to lead missions in Bosnia and Kosovo—all cases where the nations in command had a strong self-interest in the mission's success. This alteration has unquestionably given these missions the coherence and political backing they need to work, making them much more effective than UN-commanded missions could ever be in environments often riddled with violence. Although no precedent for a combined peacekeeping and military mission exists yet, experimentation with peacekeeping design has recently made the world a more secure place. Even more encouraging, the Afghan central government welcomes U.S. participation in an expanded peacekeeping mission.²¹

At a political level, U.S. leadership of this kind of operation in Afghanistan would not be significantly different from the Kosovo peacekeeping mission in 1999, where NATO troops, already deployed in the area for war-fighting purposes, changed hats and poured into the province as peacekeepers as soon as a treaty was signed. As in Kosovo, the fact that unilateral U.S. military intervention is often viewed with suspicion enhances the necessity that the ensuing peacekeeping mission, especially if led by the United States, be multilateral and authorized by the UN. Following a multilateral course is the only way to ensure that all the important players on the ground perceive the mission to be legitimate.

An Exit Strategy

Another significant enduring concern of U.S. policymakers has been finding a way to extricate troops from a peacekeeping operation when the mission has been achieved, so that U.S. forces are not forced to stay forever. The United States wants countries to take responsibility for their own security, rather than rely on permanent outside support. As a cautionary example, Pentagon officials repeatedly refer to the U.S. peacekeeping force in the Sinai, where several hundred U.S. troops have been stationed for 22 years. So that defense officials might use budgetary and personnel resources for ef-

forts considered more central to U.S. security, the Pentagon hopes to withdraw that particular force as soon as possible and to avoid repeating the experience elsewhere.²²

The ability to withdraw should not be an issue for troops in Afghanistan, despite talk of foreign forces getting bogged down there in the past. An expanded peacekeeping force need not remain once Afghanistan's new security forces are fully staffed, which will take place hopefully within the next two years. What Afghanistan needs most is a boost of confidence in its ability to hold together as a nation. Once it gets that boost, the danger of anarchy will sufficiently diminish.

Regional tribal councils are pervasive in Afghanistan, and any outsiders' attempt to transplant some other political model to the country by force would be a mistake. Peacekeeping should be designed to stave off anarchy and prevent the revival of terrorist influence in the country—not to make Afghanistan a functioning democracy or adopt a particular form of governmental rule. Achieving Afghan territorial stability matters most and will keep the duration of any operation limited.

U.S. military commanders are wary of mission creep—the possibility that an operation begun with limited goals will expand to include an unreasonable variety of tasks once in place. U.S. leadership in the design of the mission mandate can make a difference on this issue. Careful wording of a Security Council resolution, emphasizing Afghanistan's own responsibility for basic policing and tying the duration of peacekeeping to the military training programs already in place, can set clear limits on the operation.

Over time, once the new national government gains the legitimacy needed to govern effectively—and especially once the warlords have realized that their interests lie in cooperating with the new Afghan national army—the peacekeeping force should be withdrawn. Peacekeeping and training of the nation's own security forces must proceed simultaneously. The mandate of the expanded peacekeeping mission should clearly state the international community's purpose of buttressing Afghanistan's national security forces temporarily, not of replacing them.

Afghanistan needs a boost of confidence in its ability to hold together as a nation.

Peacekeeping Beats Anarchy

An unprecedented level of international cooperation has emerged in the fight against terrorism. The outcome includes an amazing level of support

for U.S. efforts among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, including China and Russia. The United States should use this goodwill and its status as the sole remaining military superpower to lead an effort to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base for terrorist operations.

Peacekeeping should be designed to stave off anarchy, not make a democracy.

Taking this overseas risk now will help ensure homeland security in the future.

As the war against terrorism expands to other areas, the United States must keep the principles outlined here in mind. In particular, if the United States goes to war with Iraq, Washington must be prepared both diplomatically and militarily to lead a UN-authorized peacekeeping mission there.

When regimes collapse into anarchy, U.S. security interests are threatened, especially when terrorists may use the resulting mayhem to gain access to WMD. When no obvious regional allies can bear the burden of leading a major peacekeeping mission, and especially when U.S. forces are simultaneously involved in military action nearby, Washington must become adept at constructing peacekeeping mandates designed to build support for a stable new regime and enhance that regime's eventual autonomy. The United States must demonstrate its political will and staying power and must secure multilateral backing to enhance the new regime's legitimacy.

When anarchical societies harboring terrorists abroad endanger the safety of ordinary U.S. citizens, it is only right that the United States should welcome a leadership role in peacekeeping missions as a means of safeguarding the future well-being of the nation and the American people. Current U.S. policies are inadequate to meet the nation's long-term security interests. If the United States wants to win the war against terrorism, the government must be willing to command peacekeeping operations aimed at preventing anarchy and to seek broad multilateral support for these missions. In an era when anarchic societies pose a greater threat to the welfare of the United States than the armies of most nation-states, U.S. defense leaders need to rethink the role that peacekeeping plays in both military planning and national security. Reevaluation and redefinition should start with Afghanistan.

Notes

1. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386, December 20, 2001, www.un.org (accessed October 6, 2002).
2. White House Press briefings, January 16 and January 28, 2002, www.whitehouse.gov (accessed October 6, 2002) (remarks of White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer);

- Defense Department press briefings, Federal News Service, February 26, 2002; March 6, 2002; and March 25, 2002 (remarks of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld); Pentagon briefing, reported on CNN Live Event/Special, April 17, 2002 (remarks of Rumsfeld); White House press briefing, Federal News Service, April 18, 2002 (remarks of Fleischer); Donald Rumsfeld, testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, Federal News Service, July 31, 2002; *ABC News Transcripts*, September 6, 2002 (summarized comments of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz) (hereinafter Wolfowitz comments).
3. Donald Rumsfeld, testimony before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, *Fiscal Year '03 Defense Department Appropriations*, Federal News Service, May 21, 2002 (hereinafter Rumsfeld appropriations testimony).
 4. *Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002*, 107th Cong., 2d sess., H.R. 3994. The House passed the key Lantos amendment on May 21, 2002.
 5. Wolfowitz comments.
 6. James Dao, "Doubts Now Raised over Extending Force Beyond Kabul," *New York Times*, September 18, 2002.
 7. Defense Department briefing, Federal News Service, June 21, 2001 (remarks of Rumsfeld).
 8. NBC News, "Meet the Press," February 24, 2002 (transcripted comments by Rumsfeld).
 9. For an example, see Vernon Loeb, "Study: New Demands Could Tax Military," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2002 (citing estimates of William J. Durch of the Stimson Center).
 10. Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (fall 1997): 5–53.
 11. Gen. Tommy Franks, testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, July 31, 2002, Federal New Service.
 12. Paul Wolfowitz, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, *Situation in Afghanistan*, Federal News Service, June 26, 2002 (hereinafter Wolfowitz Afghanistan testimony).
 13. Rumsfeld appropriations testimony.
 14. William Langewiesche, "Peace Is Hell," *Atlantic Monthly* 288, no. 3 (October 2001): 51–80; Bob Shacochis, *The Immaculate Invasion* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999).
 15. Alan Ryan, *Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks: Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor*, Study Paper 304 (Duntroon, ACT: Australian Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2000).
 16. David Dickens, "Can East Timor Be a Blueprint for Burden Sharing?" *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (summer 2002): 29–40.
 17. Peter Grier, "Turkey Stands Forward," *Air Force Magazine*, February 2002.
 18. Richard Armitage, testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Situation in Afghanistan*, Federal News Service, June 26, 2002.
 19. Wolfowitz Afghanistan testimony.
 20. Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha America, 1994).
 21. Karen DeYoung, "Bush Says U.S. Will Help Train Army, Police; Karzai's Call for Increased Participation in Peacekeeping Rejected," *Washington Post*, January 29, 2002.

22. Paul Wolfowitz, testimony before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, *Budget Request for the Defense Department*, Federal News Service, February 27, 2002; Donald Rumsfeld, Scott Air Force Base, Federal News Service, April 18, 2002 (remarks to a town hall meeting with troops).

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, through the Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University.