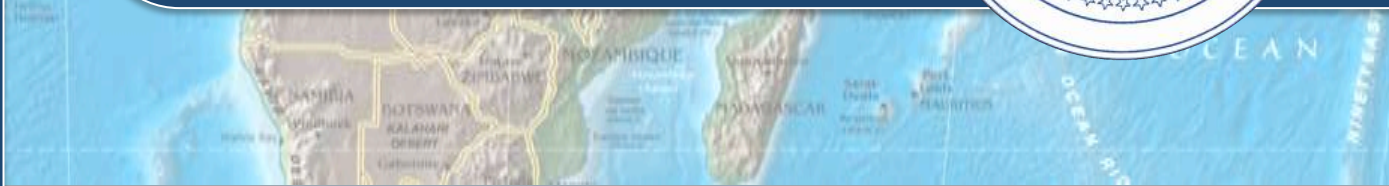




# MOBILIZING NATO FOR AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

CONFRONTING THE EXTREMIST  
THREAT TO NATO NATIONS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE  
PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS



**MOBILIZING NATO FOR AF-PAK:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTREMIST THREAT**

**Mobilizing NATO for Afghanistan and Pakistan**

**A Project of the  
Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress**



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MOBILIZING NATO FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTREMIST THREAT  
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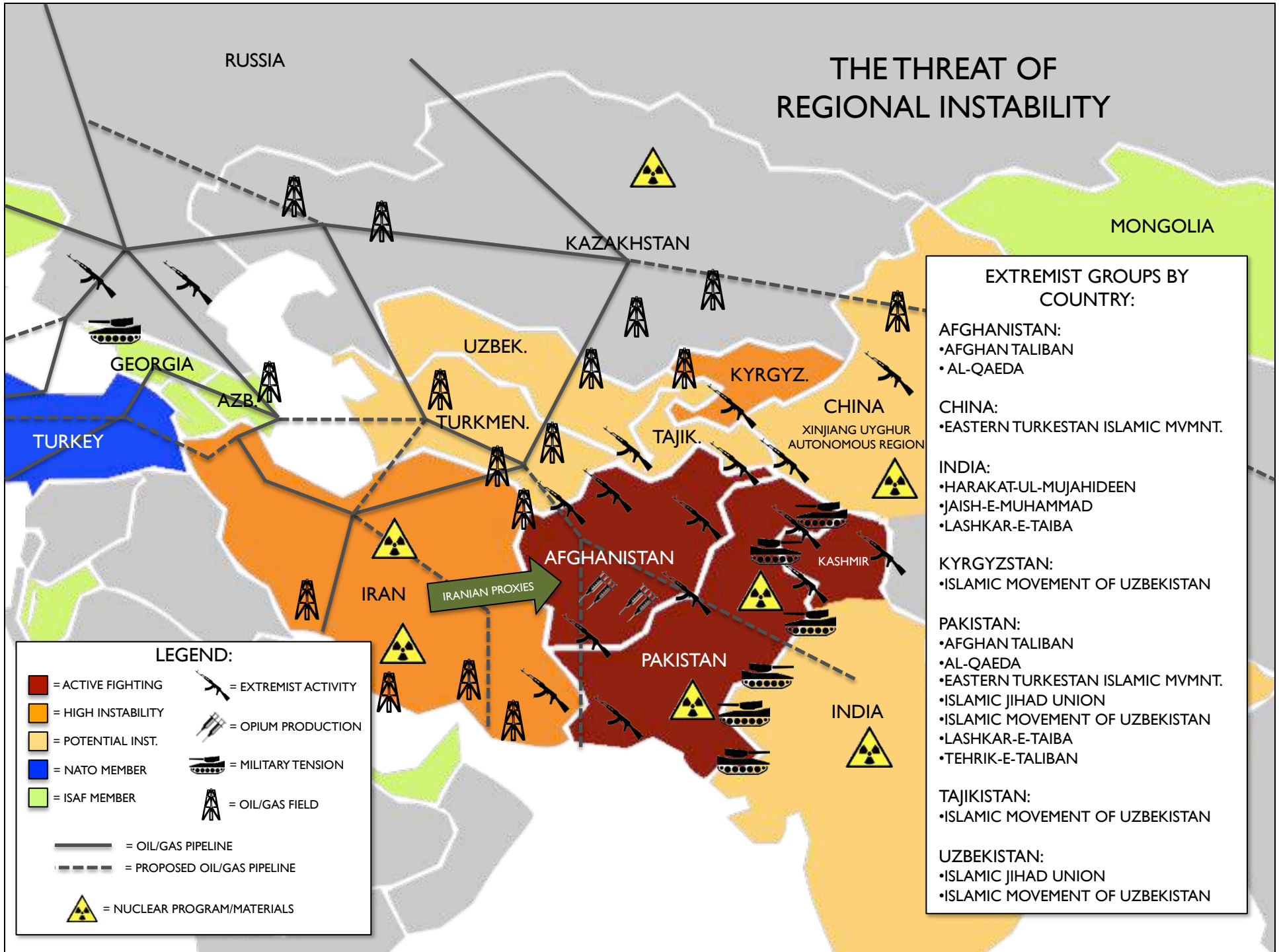
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# THE THREAT OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY



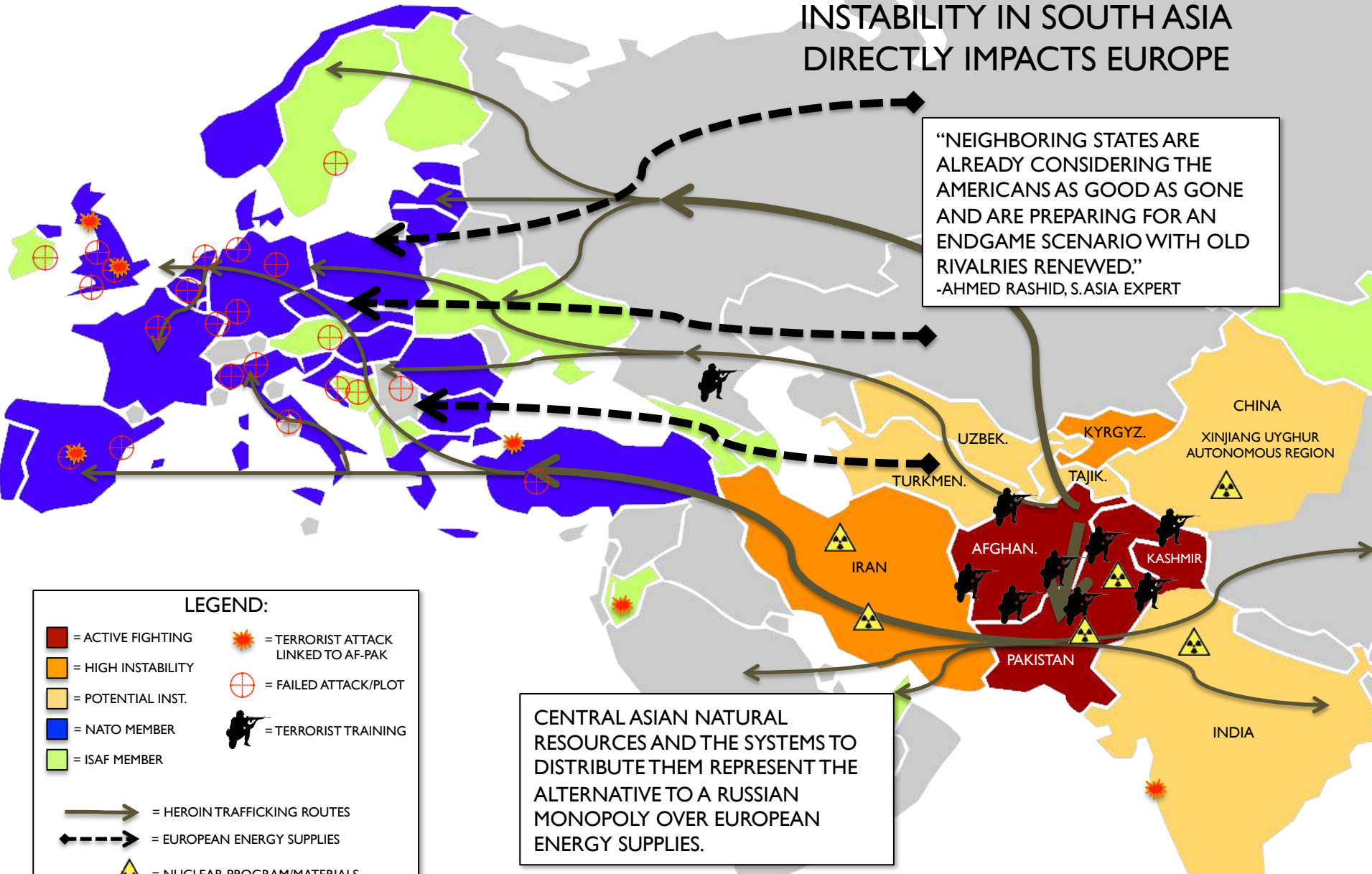
- EXTREMIST GROUPS BY COUNTRY:**
- AFGHANISTAN:**
- AFGHAN TALIBAN
  - AL-QAEDA
- CHINA:**
- EASTERN TURKESTAN ISLAMIC MVMNT.
- INDIA:**
- HARAKAT-UL-MUJAHIDEEN
  - JAISH-E-MUHAMMAD
  - LASHKAR-E-TAIBA
- KYRGYZSTAN:**
- ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN
- PAKISTAN:**
- AFGHAN TALIBAN
  - AL-QAEDA
  - EASTERN TURKESTAN ISLAMIC MVMNT.
  - ISLAMIC JIHAD UNION
  - ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN
  - LASHKAR-E-TAIBA
  - TEHRIK-E-TALIBAN
- TAJIKISTAN:**
- ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN
- UZBEKISTAN:**
- ISLAMIC JIHAD UNION
  - ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

**LEGEND:**

	= ACTIVE FIGHTING		= EXTREMIST ACTIVITY
	= HIGH INSTABILITY		= OPIUM PRODUCTION
	= POTENTIAL INST.		= MILITARY TENSION
	= NATO MEMBER		= OIL/GAS FIELD
	= ISAF MEMBER		= OIL/GAS PIPELINE
			= PROPOSED OIL/GAS PIPELINE
	= NUCLEAR PROGRAM/MATERIALS		

# INSTABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA DIRECTLY IMPACTS EUROPE

“NEIGHBORING STATES ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING THE AMERICANS AS GOOD AS GONE AND ARE PREPARING FOR AN ENDGAME SCENARIO WITH OLD RIVALRIES RENEWED.”  
-AHMED RASHID, S.ASIA EXPERT



**LEGEND:**

- = ACTIVE FIGHTING
- = HIGH INSTABILITY
- = POTENTIAL INST.
- = NATO MEMBER
- = ISAF MEMBER
- + = TERRORIST ATTACK LINKED TO AF-PAK
- + = FAILED ATTACK/PLOT
- + = TERRORIST TRAINING
- + = NUCLEAR PROGRAM/MATERIALS
- + = HEROIN TRAFFICKING ROUTES
- + = EUROPEAN ENERGY SUPPLIES

CENTRAL ASIAN NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE SYSTEMS TO DISTRIBUTE THEM REPRESENT THE ALTERNATIVE TO A RUSSIAN MONOPOLY OVER EUROPEAN ENERGY SUPPLIES.

92% OF THE WORLD'S HEROIN ORIGINATES IN AFGHANISTAN

9 MAJOR MILITANT GROUPS ARE ACTIVE IN CENTRAL/SOUTH ASIA



## FOREWORD

This initiative to reenergize NATO's efforts in Afghanistan began in August of 2009. The goal was to help marshal key elements of the Alliance's massive resource base to more effectively and efficiently operate in Afghanistan, while pushing NATO to adopt a strategy that encompassed not only Afghanistan, but also its neighbor, Pakistan. By developing this strategy, identifying unused or mal-deployed European resources, and linking the threat of widespread regional fallout and terrorism with failure in Afghanistan and Pakistan, we hope to increase European political, military, and civilian support for NATO's mission.

While soldiers from all 28 NATO countries are bravely serving in Afghanistan, the narrative detailing why the fight in Afghanistan is critical to transatlantic security has not been adequately conveyed to a skeptical European public. It is for that reason that we have undertaken the following assessment of the danger Europe faces from extremist terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is our hope that this assessment will convince Europeans of the need to adequately resource the Afghan mission and remove operational hindrances covered in our first report.

There is also a greater political danger that would result from a failure in Afghanistan. The Alliance itself runs the risk of being rendered obsolete due to the widely held belief that its future significance is dependent on defeating extremist militancy and fostering a more stable Afghanistan.

In the United States, there is a growing perception that our European allies are becoming security consumers and not security providers. A new strategic concept effort that does not thoroughly address the crisis in Afghanistan will not offer the level of reform needed to turn things around.

If the NATO alliance cannot succeed in a mission for which it has invoked Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, the existence and purpose of the Alliance will inevitably come into question. In an era without the Cold War threat of the Warsaw Pact, the utility of the transatlantic alliance will be determined by how it responds to the rise of new security threats. At a recent meeting on NATO's new Strategic Concept, Defense Secretary Robert Gates rightly warned that if immediate reforms are not enacted, the new Strategic Concept would not be worth the scrap of paper it was written on.

The entire effort is made possible by generous grants from the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Dr. Scholl Foundation. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary advice and inputs of the 50-plus preeminent experts who helped create and improve our original drafts. Hailing from the U.S., Europe, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, their perspectives were invaluable.

In compiling this supplement we owe a debt of gratitude to the Embassies and Ambassadors of Afghanistan, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. I would also like to thank Commander of U.S. Central Command, General David Petraeus and the French Ministry of Defense. This ongoing effort gathers strength from the hard work of the dedicated Center Staff, experts, and other partners. We all look forward to this initiative's future findings, as the international community seeks to curb extremist militancy in South and Central Asia and safeguard not only the members of NATO but the entire global community from this threat.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Abshire".

David M. Abshire  
President and CEO, Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress



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It should be noted that while a consensus of members of this project supports the overall thrust of the report, not all members would necessarily agree with every item. Members of the issue teams are not responsible for the opinions expressed throughout this document.



## INTRODUCTION

Many citizens of NATO member nations have failed to grasp that a failure of the international effort in Afghanistan would foster instability across much of Central and South Asia, abet the spread of extremist groups and ideologies throughout the region, increase the threat of terrorism to Europe and North America, and could gravely damage the transatlantic relationship.

One reason for this is that NATO has not adopted or explained the need for a comprehensive regional approach, opting instead for a strategy focused almost exclusively on Afghanistan, even though the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and affiliated terrorist groups are based in Pakistan. Despite this obvious interconnection, NATO has failed to fully embrace a broader Afghanistan-Pakistan mission. Many in Europe and North America have opposed the war in Afghanistan on the grounds that the real enemy, the al-Qaeda leadership, is in Pakistan. If NATO adopted a fully integrated regional approach, this line of opposition would be quelled and the Alliance would have a broader strategy that addresses the multi-faceted threats that emanate from the region.

The following is an assessment of the threat that regional instability, Islamist militants, and terrorist networks pose to countries in the region, as well as to Europe and North America. The assessment also focuses on the possible impact of a NATO failure in Afghanistan.

At present, NATO has not given itself the authority to conduct this kind of overall assessment. Despite clear links between international terrorism and NATO efforts in Afghanistan, Europe continues to separate NATO-led expeditionary operations in Afghanistan from domestic counter-terrorism. Those domestic operations are almost exclusively handled by national law-enforcement agencies, loosely coordinated through the European Union. Because of this inefficiency, there is no comprehensive assessment or general understanding of the overall threat caused by instability and extremist activity in Central and South Asia. This virtually ensures declining European public support for the Afghanistan mission.

While NATO should not necessarily take over the coordination of domestic law enforcement, NATO should play a significant role in shaping a comprehensive strategic approach to counter-terrorism as it is the only institution that can effectively integrate domestic counter-terrorism operations with operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Because of this unique position, NATO must undertake a comprehensive threat assessment that demonstrates the risk Europe faces from militancy in south and central Asia.

If the NATO effort in Afghanistan falters, it will have a wide-ranging impact not just on Afghanistan, but throughout Central and South Asia, the transatlantic community, and across the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and much of the world.

Failure would allow Afghanistan to once again serve as a safe haven for emboldened radical forces and terrorist networks, while serving as a rallying-cry and recruiting call for militant Islamists throughout the world. From a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, or from an Afghanistan with no effective state, these forces could plan and launch attacks, destabilize Pakistan, and jeopardize the security of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal.



Many senior elements within the Taliban, Al-Qaeda's enablers, are not content to remain a local movement. Much of both the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban leadership sympathize with al-Qaeda and its goal of global jihad. Furthermore, in an effort to expand their extremist ideology and political control, the Pakistani Taliban and allies in al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have launched a war against the government of Pakistan and are continuing to destabilize that nuclear-armed nation. A NATO failure in Afghanistan would embolden the Afghan Taliban to continue to work with their Pakistani Taliban allies to cause upheaval in Pakistan.

*A failure for NATO in Afghanistan and Pakistan will shatter transatlantic unity and lead more people to question the purpose of NATO in the 21st century.*

The actions of these militants are also threatening to create instability in India, Central Asia, and China, thereby threatening America's and Europe's greater strategic interests. A Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan could induce the Pakistani military and intelligence services to renew and enhance their cooperation with militants. Such a development would likely embolden ideologically aligned militants that

strive to attack India, thus raising the prospect for increased terrorist attacks in India which could provoke an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could destabilize the whole region. Already, perceptions that the United States and Europe are wavering in their commitment to the region have sparked concerns that regional countries may be preparing their own proxies for Afghanistan. Such movement could potentially create an atmosphere like the one that existed during the Afghan civil war in the 1990s.

A failure for NATO in Afghanistan and Pakistan will shatter transatlantic unity and lead more people to question the purpose of NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Moreover, a NATO defeat in Afghanistan would have a direct impact on the homeland security of NATO countries, particularly Europe. Since 9/11, terrorists have executed three major attacks in Europe against NATO member states Spain, Turkey, and Great Britain, killing nearly 300 people, and have attempted several other attacks across the continent. In the last eight years, European authorities have made hundreds of arrests and have broken up several terrorist cells that were in the process of planning or carrying out large-scale attacks. Extremist groups continue to operate in Europe, recruiting new members and planning strikes designed to inflict indiscriminant mass casualties.

In many cases, perpetrators of terrorist attacks and members of militant Islamist groups in Europe are citizens or legal residents of European countries. This has led many to view Europe's exposure to terrorism as a primarily domestic security concern.

However this approach ignores the fact that most attacks, and the well-designed and potentially most lethal terrorist plots against Europe, have been conducted by groups that received training, support, orders, or guidance from organizations abroad, especially al-Qaeda and affiliated groups in South and Central Asia. Recent assessments from European and U.S. intelligence agencies



confirm that terrorist groups use the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region to train and indoctrinate new recruits, plan terrorist attacks, and communicate with operational cells overseas. Moreover, taking advantage of the innumerable familial and social networks connecting Europe's Muslim communities with Central and South Asia, extremist groups based in the region maintain a presence across Western Europe, recruiting new members and placing operatives on European territory. **The international community's effort in Afghanistan has reached a turning point. To be successful, Europe's counter-terrorism strategy must incorporate measures to neutralize terrorist threats that germinate in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region and radiate outward to Europe and around the world.**

## A SAFE HAVEN FOR RADICAL FORCES

**Should NATO falter in Afghanistan, radical forces seeking to strike Europe and North America would be granted new safe havens from which they could plan and train for attacks against Western targets.** At the invitation of Hassan al Turabi, head of Sudan's National Islamic Front, al-Qaeda maintained a base of operations in Sudan throughout the first half of the 1990s. In 1996, the Sudanese government, under international pressure to end support for terrorism, forced Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants to leave the country. By that time, however, the Taliban had secured control over large parts of Afghanistan and were able to offer bin Laden a new safe haven to maintain his base of operations.

With the Taliban's radical interpretation and application of *sharia* (Islamic law) and the remoteness of Afghanistan, the country proved to be an ideal headquarters and training ground for al-Qaeda and its operatives. The Taliban incorporated al-Qaeda into the Afghan Ministry of Defense, and Osama bin Laden and Mullah Muhammad Omar spent evenings discussing radical Islamic theology.<sup>1</sup> From this base of operations, al-Qaeda planned and trained for attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the *U.S.S. Cole*, the World Trade Center in New York, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. With the sympathetic Taliban regime sheltering the al-Qaeda leadership, the United States could do little beyond launching cruise missile strikes and conducting limited Special Forces/CIA operations.

*Ties between the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda stretch back to the Pakistani Taliban's earliest leaders.*

-BRIGADIER MAHMOOD SHAH (RET).  
PAKISTANI ARMY<sup>2</sup>

Following 9/11, the United States, international allies, and the Afghan Northern Alliance were able to dislodge the Taliban from most of the country. Al-Qaeda's leaders were scattered, but managed to regroup and establish new bases of operation in Pakistan's tribal border region, which remains largely beyond the control of the Pakistani central government. From their safe haven in Pakistan, al-Qaeda has been able to

cultivate close ties with the Pakistan Taliban for protection, logistics, training, and recruiting. Amir Rana, the director of the Pakistan Institute for peace studies said, "The Taliban is the local partner of al-Qaeda in Pakistan...It has no capacity for an international agenda on its own."<sup>2</sup>



In its current state, the Afghan government of Hamid Karzai has been unable to exercise effective authority throughout much of the country. In areas that have insufficient Afghan and ISAF forces, the Taliban and other militant forces have filled the resulting power vacuum.

**A NATO failure would enable the Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies to expand their control of Afghan territory and re-establish the country as a base of international operations.**

Boosted by the infrastructure built with western aid and the propaganda victory of defeating international forces, the Taliban and al-Qaeda would be able to pursue broader regional objectives in Central and South Asia, in cooperation with Tehrik-e-Taliban (the Pakistani Taliban), Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and other terrorist groups. Al-Qaeda, which has steadily built alliances with terrorist organizations around the world—from Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in North Africa—since being expelled from Afghanistan, would be able to expand and deepen its global reach, including its ability to strike European and American targets.

Although the Taliban started out in the early 1990s as a localized movement, the leadership developed close links to al-Qaeda in the late 1990s following Osama bin Laden’s relocation to Afghanistan from Sudan in 1996. The Taliban developed a worldview supportive of al-Qaeda and its goal of global jihad and adopted an increasingly harsh interpretation of Islam as the group sought to consolidate its power base in Afghanistan. Eight years of war against the U.S. and its NATO partners appears to have only strengthened these bonds. After being held by the Taliban for seven months in 2008-2009, *New York Times* reporter, David Rohde, noted the increasing level of Taliban radicalization and al-Qaeda-Taliban cooperation. It is therefore almost impossible to imagine a resurgent Taliban free of any al-Qaeda ties.

**TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS IN THE AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER REGION**

The escalated Predator drone program begun in the final year of the Bush Administration and continued by President Obama has succeeded in eliminating key al-Qaeda lieutenants as well as the Pakistani Taliban, Uzbek, and Turkmen militant leadership, such as Baitullah Meshud, Hakimullah Mehsud, Qari Zafar, Tahir Yuldashev, and Abdul Haq al-Turkistani. Following their removal from power in 2001, the Taliban and al-Qaeda established new training camps across the border in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). According to Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair: “[Al-Qaeda leaders] use the tribal areas [of Pakistan] as a base from which they can...communicate with operational cells abroad, and provide training and indoctrination to new terrorist operatives.”<sup>3</sup>

*“[Al-Qaeda leaders] use the tribal areas [of Pakistan] as a base from which they can...communicate with operational cells abroad, and provide training and indoctrination to new terrorist operatives.”*

-DENNIS BLAIR  
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

**A number of terrorists—including citizens of European countries—have trained in camps in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas and have attempted to carry out attacks against**



**European targets.** U.S. and European counterterrorism officials report a rising number of Western recruits traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan for paramilitary training in these Taliban-run camps. **From 2007-2009, recruits from Britain, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands were found to have received training from or to be traveling to Taliban-run training camps in North Waziristan and Afghanistan.** Many of these would-be terrorists sought out training to carry out attacks against targets in Europe. The skills acquired in these camps, such as bomb making and target surveillance, greatly enhanced the lethality of these homegrown terrorists, allowing them to carry out more effective and deadly attacks upon their return.

**Should NATO falter in Afghanistan, the number of terrorist training camps would likely increase dramatically, swelling the ranks of would-be terrorists seeking to attack Western targets.** While many recent plots have been disrupted by counterterrorism efforts, this has largely been due to intelligence gained from having a robust military presence in the region. Such an asset would be immediately lost following any withdrawal from the region. This would also apply to the hitherto successful Predator drone campaign that owes much of its success to intelligence gathered on the battlefield as well as cooperation between U.S. and Pakistani intelligence agencies. Such cooperation would undoubtedly become less likely if the U.S. reduced its presence in the region.

#### TALIBAN AND AL-QAEDA LEADERSHIP IN PAKISTAN

American intelligence officials have long believed that prominent members of the Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership, including Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar, have established bases in Pakistan,— the most notorious of these being in the city of Quetta in Baluchistan province. Many of the top Taliban commanders remain in hiding in and around Quetta while others are believed to have relocated to the city of Karachi. It is from these sanctuaries that Mullah Omar and his commanders plan and launch cross-border strikes in Afghanistan. This Afghan Taliban leadership has formed what is referred to as the Quetta Shura, which has established a shadow government in parts of southern Afghanistan, appointing shadow governors for most provinces, while intimidating and terrorizing the Afghan population under its sway.

While there have been reports indicating that a number of shadow governors and as many as seven of the 15 members of Quetta Shura, including Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, second in influence only to Mullah Omar, have been arrested by the Pakistani government,<sup>4</sup> many of these arrests have yet to be confirmed and it will be difficult to assess whether these arrests have had any significant impact on the Quetta Shura's operational capability.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, **another network of Afghan commanders allied with the Afghan Taliban continues to operate largely unmolested in Pakistan's tribal border areas.** These networks have carried out numerous attacks on NATO forces and have specialized in dramatic suicide bombings in urban areas such as Kabul. Two of the most active networks – which both have long-standing ties to Pakistan's ISI – are led by Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.



## PROPAGANDA VICTORY FOR AL-QAEDA

**If the U.S. and NATO fail in Afghanistan, the defeat will serve as a boost for the propaganda and recruiting efforts of radical Islamist forces around the world.** Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist forces showcased this victory as proof that a superpower could be defeated by a band of Islamist guerrillas. This victory served as a recruiting tool and an inspiration for aspiring Islamist militants around the world. A similar victory over NATO and the United States would similarly boost al-Qaeda and Taliban recruiting, fundraising, and influence throughout the Muslim world. From an enlarged Afghanistan-Pakistan safe haven, a galvanized, reinforced, and re-equipped al-Qaeda could begin to launch bolder and more deadly attacks against the West.

*“[The extremist movement] possesses significant regional cards, chiefly the Taliban Pakistan and the al-Qaeda Organization, and probably more important cards in Central Asia, Chinese Eastern Turkistan, and other regions in Iran.”*

-ABDULLAH SA'ID  
COMMANDER OF THE LASHKAR AL ZIL  
“AL-QAEDA'S SHADOW ARMY”

General Sir David Richards, the head of the British Army, warned that NATO's failure would have an “intoxicating impact” on worldwide extremism, and that defeating NATO would convince Islamist radicals that “anything was possible.”<sup>6</sup> As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated, “The reality is that failure in Afghanistan would be a huge setback... Taliban and al-Qaeda, as far as they're concerned, defeated one superpower. For them to be seen to defeat a second... would have catastrophic consequences... energizing the extremist movement, al-Qaeda recruitment, operations, fundraising, and so on.”<sup>7</sup>

In April 2009, Abdullah Sa'id, the commander of the Lashkar al Zil, also known as al-Qaeda's Shadow Army, issued a statement outlining the objectives of al-Qaeda and its allies in the fight against U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Sa'id vowed that the Taliban and al-Qaeda will continue to bleed the US and NATO allies through “organized guerilla warfare” and that attacks will continue to be planned against the West. Sa'id reiterated that the leverage gained in Afghanistan will be used to expand the jihad into neighboring countries and will affect the outcomes there too.<sup>8</sup>

*General Sir David Richards, the head of the British Army, warned that NATO's failure would have an “intoxicating impact” on worldwide extremism, and that defeating NATO would convince Islamist radicals that “anything was possible.”*

Sa'id also emphasized the close relationship between the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other jihadist groups in his description of the strength



of the Taliban. “[I]t possesses significant regional cards, chiefly the Taliban Pakistan and the al-Qaeda Organization, and probably more important cards in Central Asia, Chinese Eastern Turkistan, and other regions in Iran,” he said.<sup>9</sup>

## THREAT TO PAKISTAN

**The Taliban have expanded their operations in Pakistan, thereby further destabilizing the region and creating additional space from which extremist militants can plot and train in order to carry out attacks against the West.**

*Over the past eight years, extremist activity in Pakistan has resulted in the death of some 2,992 Pakistani security personnel and 8,007 Pakistani civilians.*

While many Afghan Taliban were pushed into Pakistan, Taliban-style ideology and tactics have become increasingly championed by local Pakistani militants. This diffusion of ideology and tactics has aided the Pakistani Taliban’s efforts to weaken the Pakistani state and establish pockets of control, particularly in the northwest part of the country. The Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda work together closely.

**The Tehrik-i-Taliban, the main Pakistani Taliban militant umbrella group, has maintained close ties with Mullah Omar’s Afghan Taliban and is strengthening its links to Punjabi militant networks.** Many of these networks were set up by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to attack Indian authorities in Kashmir. Over the past eight years, extremist activity in Pakistan has resulted in the death of some 2,992 Pakistani security personnel and 8,007 Pakistani civilians.<sup>10</sup>

The Taliban continues to challenge the writ of the Pakistani state and has already established an Islamic state-within-a-state in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and some parts of the Northwest Frontier Provinces (NWFP). Drawing from a Pashtun population that stretches from Pakistan into Afghanistan, Taliban movements have established control over large portions of Southern Afghanistan, the mountainous Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, and the semi-lawless tribal areas of Pakistan. Taliban-linked militants have begun extending their influence beyond their traditional Pashtun power bases into Baluchistan and the more developed areas of Punjab. Scores of refugees have fled from the brutal violence in these regions, and the Pakistani government has struggled to provide for the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons who have yet to return home.<sup>11</sup> Pakistani cities have also witnessed unparalleled levels of violence as the Taliban have displayed an ability to strike major Pakistani government targets, including the military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Any weakness or failure of the Pakistani government endangers the security of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal and raises the specter of an expanded safe-haven for radical forces. Both of these outcomes present a direct danger to NATO member nations. Radical groups launching attacks from Pakistan could take advantage of societal and cultural ties to Europe to infiltrate local populations and establish sleeper cells. Nuclear weapons in the hands of radical groups would allow them to launch attacks of unimaginable scale and destruction. **NATO and its European**





**members must grasp the threat of Pakistani destabilization brought on by failure in Afghanistan.**

#### WEAKNESS OF THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT

**While the Pakistani government's recent offensives against the Taliban in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan are positive steps, the Taliban remain a significant threat to Pakistan's stability.** The Pakistani Army is stretched thin and the military has ruled out opening another front in North Waziristan, where much of the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network are located. Battered by a major economic crisis and weakened by unstable political coalitions and rampant political infighting, the civilian government of Pakistan is fragile. State institutions have become riddled with corruption, hindering the delivery of aid and services. Large numbers of internally displaced persons threaten to undermine the current delicate anti-Taliban political consensus. President Zardari's leadership is weak, as he suffers from dismal approval ratings and has largely sequestered himself in the Presidential Palace. Zardari's credibility has been further damaged by the government's inability to pass the National Reconciliation Ordinance that would have legitimized the ruling party by dismissing all corruption cases against President Zardari and other PPP leaders.

#### A NEW AFGHAN CIVIL WAR AND DISPLACED PERSONS

If the Taliban were to reestablish control in Afghanistan, they would likely receive some popular support from the half of the Afghan population that is ethnically Pashtun. The Taliban, however, would continue to be zealously opposed by the non-Pashtun Uzbek and Tajik minorities that battled the Taliban during the 1990s. Afghanistan would therefore likely return to a scenario reminiscent of the 1990s where a civil war in the early 1990s was followed by a violent Taliban consolidation of power culminating in part with the seizure of Kabul in 1996, yet followed by continued clashes between the Pashtun-dominated Taliban and the Northern Alliance, comprised mainly of Afghanistan's other ethnic groups. While the West (and possibly Russia and India) could potentially support anti-Taliban elements, such assistance would most likely fuel a long-term civil war between northern and southern Afghanistan, rather than produce victory by an anti-Taliban alliance. Death and poverty would grip Afghanistan, exacerbating the region's crisis of refugees and displaced persons.<sup>12</sup>

**Currently, an estimated 1.8 million Afghan refugees are in Pakistan,<sup>13</sup> in addition to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs), due to fighting in NWFP and FATA.<sup>14</sup> These IDPs are taxing the limited resources of the Pakistani government and aid agencies. The vast majority of these IDPs are Pashtun and, faced with extreme poverty, could potentially become a recruiting pool for radical extremists.<sup>15</sup> The re-ignition of an Afghan civil war would create another massive influx of refugees into Pakistan, adding to the existing Afghan refugees and Pakistani IDPs, providing a fertile ground for radicalization, and greatly contributing to the destabilization of Pakistan.**



### MILITANTS AND THE PAKISTANI MILITARY

**Close historical ties between the Pakistani military and the Taliban have long blinded the Pakistani leadership and military to the threat posed by the Taliban.** For decades, the Taliban and other Punjabi and Kashmiri radical groups have served as tools of Pakistani security policy, providing a sphere of influence in Afghanistan in the 1990s and a source of leverage against India.

The Pakistani military believes that its long-term enemy is India and that India is attempting to use Afghan territory to destabilize western Pakistan. Therefore, the Pakistani military considers the Afghan Taliban to be the only hedge against India's influence in Kabul.

**Elements of the Pakistani security forces continue to maintain links with militants in order to hedge against a possible withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan.**

Additionally, the increasing number of Punjabi militants engaged in anti-government activity has raised concerns that the Punjabi dominated military will be less enthusiastic about taking on members of their own ethnicity.<sup>16</sup>

While the almost daily attacks against the Pakistani government have inspired a crackdown on the Pakistani Taliban, the Pakistani army has traditionally drawn distinctions between the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban. **The Pakistani military has time and again refused to carry out operations in North Waziristan, where key militant leaders such as Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar are based.**<sup>17</sup>

Pakistani military strategists particularly favor the Haqqani network as their most effective tool for blunting Indian influence in Afghanistan. Credible U.S. media reports indicate that the Haqqani network, in cooperation with Pakistani intelligence, was responsible for the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul in July 2008, killing more than 50 people, including two senior Indian officials. Haqqani is a powerful independent militant leader with close ties to the Afghan Taliban, having served as tribal affairs minister in the Taliban regime in the late 1990s. The Haqqani network has been a major facilitator of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, and responsible for some of the fiercest attacks against U.S. and coalition forces. Haqqani forces

*Close historical ties between the Pakistani military and the Taliban have long blinded the Pakistani leadership and military to the threat posed by the Taliban.*

were responsible for a truck bombing that killed two U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan's Khost province in March 2008, and for the storming of the Serena Hotel in Kabul during a high-level visit by Norwegian officials in January 2008.

The Pakistani military has previously overestimated its ability to control the Afghan Taliban and thus discounts the very real possibility that the Afghan Taliban, if they were to re-gain power, would

destabilize the Pakistani state through their Pakistani Taliban proxies.<sup>18</sup> The Pakistani Army has been blinded to this reality in the past by its belief that a Taliban presence must be maintained in Afghanistan to prevent Indian influence from spreading.<sup>19</sup>



The very recent crackdown by Pakistani authorities against the Afghan Taliban, which resulted in the arrest of several Taliban shadow governors and several members of the Quetta Shura, appears to signify a change in Pakistan's approach to the Afghan Taliban problem. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi stated that Pakistan arrested Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar because it was "in our interests to do so."<sup>20</sup>

However, some analysts argue that the arrests are not representative of a major shift in Pakistan's view of the Afghan Taliban. It has been widely reported that the Afghan Taliban's second in command, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, was attempting to engage in negotiations with the Afghan government when he was arrested by Pakistani agents.<sup>21</sup> Also the commander of ISAF, General Stanley McChrystal has recently said that it is possible that Baradar's arrest was a result of an internal feud within the Taliban and that he was intentionally purged from its ranks.<sup>22</sup> Additional reports have indicated that Baradar's arrest was ordered by Mullah Omar in retaliation for his willingness to negotiate.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the Pakistani government has decided that it will not extradite many of the recently arrested Taliban including mullahs Baradar, Abdul Kabir, Abdul Salam, Mir Mohammed and Younis Akhundzada.<sup>24</sup> Some analysts believe that this latest development indicates that the Pakistani government is positioning itself so that it can play a major role in negotiations between the international community and the Afghan Taliban regarding a settlement in Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

**While these arrests are lauded as an example of U.S. and Pakistani intelligence cooperation, it will suffer if Pakistani security forces begin to see the international commitment as short-lived, since it will then be in their interest to resume cooperation with the Taliban.**

Beyond the Pakistani security apparatus' suspected support for the Taliban, the threat of a young officers' revolt cannot be discounted. Pakistan has experienced four military coups (and one coup attempt) since achieving independence in 1947. However, unlike previous coups led by generals and other senior staff, there is a risk of a "colonels' coup" that would result in a military takeover by a cadre of officers sympathetic to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. As South Asia expert Ahmed Rashid notes, "What many Pakistanis fear and constantly talk about is... a colonels' coup that could bring in a pro-Islamist and anti-Western coterie of officers linked to Islamic groups... That could put Pakistan's nuclear weapons into the wrong hands. Neither a partial U.S. withdrawal nor a strategy of only using drones to target al-Qaeda could hope to

*"What many Pakistanis fear and constantly talk about is... a colonels' coup that could bring in a pro-Islamist and anti-Western coterie of officers linked to Islamic groups... That could put Pakistan's nuclear weapons into the wrong hands. Neither a partial U.S. withdrawal nor a strategy of only using drones to target al-Qaeda could hope to handle such a regional catastrophe."*

-AHMED RASHID  
SOUTH ASIA EXPERT



handle such a regional catastrophe.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1990, U.S.-Pakistan military exchange programs broke down due to the inability of the George H.W. Bush Administration to certify that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device. This failure activated the stipulations of the 1985 Pressler Amendment banning U.S. military assistance to Pakistan.<sup>27</sup> Not until 9/11 did the United States fully restart military assistance and exchange programs. As a result, an entire generation of Pakistani officers does not fit the assumed pro-Western, pro-secular mold of the Pakistani army. Many continue to see a legitimate role for jihadist groups as a tool of Pakistani state security.<sup>28</sup> The current and former heads of the U.S. Military’s Central Command (CENTCOM), Generals David Petraeus and John Abazaid, have identified this gap in the U.S.-Pakistan military relationship as cause for concern.<sup>29</sup> If radical elements within Pakistan’s officer corps were to seize power, the odds of militants gaining access to the Pakistani nuclear arsenal would dramatically increase.

### PAKISTANI NUCLEAR WEAPONS

From 2001 to 2009 the United States sent nearly \$9 billion in military assistance,<sup>30</sup> including \$100 million to secure Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and facilities,<sup>31</sup> as well as another \$3.6 billion for economic and diplomatic initiatives.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, a new five-year, \$7.5 billion assistance package was passed by Congress in September 2009 with stipulations explicitly prohibiting funds from being used for nuclear proliferation, to support terrorist groups, or to pay for attacks in neighboring countries.<sup>33</sup> However, concerns about the stability of the Pakistani government and the security of Pakistani nuclear weapons remain.

*Since 2001, even as the government has lost effective control over significant swaths of its sovereign territory and has more terrorists per square mile than any place else on earth, Pakistan has more than doubled its nuclear arsenal from a likely inventory of approximately 24 warheads to a current inventory of at least 70-90 warheads, and possibly as many as 120 warheads. This is the fastest nuclear arsenal growth in the world.*

Even as the government has lost effective control over significant swaths of its sovereign territory and has more terrorists per square mile than any place else on earth,<sup>34</sup> Pakistan continues to invest in the development of higher-yield nuclear weapons, thermonuclear weapons, warhead modernization, and increased warhead production. Several new nuclear reactors are being completed and attempts are being made to buy more from China to increase the production of fissile material.<sup>35</sup> Since 2001, Pakistan has more than doubled its nuclear arsenal from a likely inventory of approximately 24 warheads<sup>36</sup> to a current inventory of at least 70-90 warheads,<sup>37</sup> and possibly as many as 120

warheads.<sup>38</sup> This is the fastest nuclear arsenal growth in the world and is bucking the worldwide trend of nuclear arsenal reduction, raising concerns about links between members of the Pakistani nuclear program and Pakistani Islamist radicals. Though the arsenal is well protected, concealed, dispersed, and under the control of top Pakistan military leaders, extremists have



already revealed their desire to use its nuclear weapons against Western targets. If extremist groups were to seize enough nuclear material to construct a nuclear warhead, be it through the overthrow of the Pakistani government or the infiltration of the Pakistani military, it would be a regional and global security disaster and the worst possible security threat to the United States and the rest of the world since the end of the Cold War.<sup>39</sup>

Pakistan also has a significant reputation for being a major proliferator of nuclear technology. The father of Pakistan's atomic program, A.Q. Khan, became infamous for providing nuclear material and secrets to North Korea, Iran and Libya. Though some of Khan's activities were pursued for own personal gain, some believe that the Pakistani government sanctioned many of his actions. Fortunately, after a televised confession in 2004, there has been little evidence of continued Pakistani technology proliferation activity, but Khan remains well protected by the government and is a national hero in the eyes of Pakistanis.<sup>40</sup>

*The range of the average Predator Drone is approximately 600 nautical miles, while Kabul is well over 600 miles from the closest U.S. airbase at Manas, Kyrgyzstan.*

In a worst-case scenario where Pakistan becomes a jihadist state, extremists will inherit the arsenal of the second-largest Muslim state with nuclear weapons and will turn the country into a terrorist stronghold and breeding ground. Though the international community may call for intervention to secure Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, the weapons are scattered around an area twice the size of California, with many of them buried deep underground. An intervention to retake all of them would be futile and a hollow threat to the governing authority in Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

### THE INADEQUACY OF DRONES

NATO cannot simply hope that the American-led drone program will be sufficient to counter the extremist threat. If the Taliban and al-Qaeda were to succeed in ousting NATO forces and overthrowing the Afghan government, the full weight of their resources would be available to shift against Pakistan. **A reduced American presence with greater reliance on drone and missile strikes would be insufficient to ward off the advances of Islamist extremists.** Despite an ongoing campaign of U.S. drone strikes to eliminate Taliban leaders, the tempo of violence in Pakistan has increased and al-Qaeda retains the ability to conduct operations. The range of the average Predator Drone is approximately 600 nautical miles, while Kabul is well over 600 miles from the closest U.S. airbase at Manas, Kyrgyzstan. If the Taliban defeat NATO in Afghanistan and advance into Pakistan, al-Qaeda leaders will be left with a far greater area in which to hide from American drones. This will leave U.S. and NATO forces with far less territory for the basing and logistics necessary to conduct operations.<sup>42</sup>

### PAKISTANI PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

Many Pakistanis believe the United States to be an unreliable ally, due especially to a widespread perception that the United States abandoned Pakistan after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan in 1989. With the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan, opposition parties in Pakistan would be able to exploit these attitudes and once again portray the United States as a country interested only in short-term gain. Any members of the Pakistani government who had



spent political capital supporting joint U.S.-Pakistani cooperation would quickly lose popular support.

By taking advantage of their position straddling the Durand Line and the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, radical Islamist forces could greatly destabilize and potentially foster a collapse of the Pakistani government. This would increase the chances of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of radical Islamists. While the chances of Taliban forces seizing control of the Pakistan government are relatively remote, a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan emboldens Pakistan Taliban forces and ideology and forces the Pakistan military to increasingly compromise with the Taliban.

The strengthening of Taliban ideology in Afghanistan would certainly have repercussions inside Pakistan. A strengthened Pakistani Taliban would force Pakistan to either fight an emboldened and strengthened insurgency or to negotiate and compromise with the militants. Either scenario would result in dramatic regional destabilization and possibly cause violence to expand into Central Asia and India.

## REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES

### INDIA

**Beyond the impact on Pakistan, failure in Afghanistan would have repercussions throughout Asia. A resurgent Taliban would be a direct threat to the security of India.**

The Taliban have long opposed India's involvement in Afghanistan and its ties to the Northern Alliance. Recently, the Taliban have been conducting more attacks against Indian targets in Afghanistan, such as the February 26 bombing in Kabul that killed nine Indian citizens.<sup>43</sup> The Indian Embassy in Kabul has also been a target of recent terrorist attacks with two massive bombings carried out against it in the last two years. Furthermore, the Taliban have reportedly been receiving training from Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) to attack India directly. Officials tracking developments in Pakistan have stated that LeT has been training at least 130 Taliban militants that could be used to do LeT's work in Afghanistan or India.<sup>44</sup> An increased militant campaign against India or India's strategic interests could cause an Indian intervention which would further tensions throughout the region and would provide an impetus to radical Islamist groups around the world.

**The fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan has broader implications for India.** Afghanistan has long been one of the many fronts upon which India and Pakistan have vied for influence, and the Pakistani government harbors concerns about the establishment of a pro-India government in Afghanistan. Indian and Pakistani intelligence agencies continue to compete for influence in Afghanistan, and attacks by the Taliban against Indian consulates and embassies in Afghanistan have been linked to the Pakistani ISI.<sup>45</sup> Having the Taliban in Afghanistan was long seen by the Pakistani military as a way of preventing India-friendly forces from surrounding the country. Even as the Pakistani government seeks foreign assistance to fight the Pakistani Taliban, the military uses its resources to expand conventional and nuclear force capabilities for a potential war with India.<sup>46</sup>



### ANTI-INDIA MILITANCY

For India, Islamist groups in Pakistan have long posed a major security threat. Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) see India's secular, Hindu-dominated democracy as their principle enemy. For years these groups have launched attacks in the disputed Kashmir region and within India itself. The most notable of these attacks were the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 Mumbai attack, both of which were carried out by militants connected to the LeT. Recently apprehended suspected LeT operative David Headley, a U.S. citizen, had visited India nine times from 2006 to 2009 and is believed to have scouted sites for the 2008 Mumbai attacks as well as subsequent planned attacks in India.

India has for some time pressured Pakistan to crack down on these groups, but the results from Islamabad have been less than satisfactory. As the Taliban forces in the NWFP and FATA continue to become more powerful, there is evidence that these forces are building ties to sympathetic militant groups in Punjab and Kashmir. The series of attacks that have occurred in Pakistan over the past two months, including the spectacular attack on the "Pakistani Pentagon" in Rawalpindi, bear the hallmarks of the Pakistani Taliban.

There is also a growing fear that Pakistan-based groups like the LeT are contributing to the radicalization and training of Muslims living in India. **While India exercised commendable restraint in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai attack, there is no guarantee that any subsequent terrorist attacks carried out by militants linked to Pakistan will not incur an Indian military retaliation against Pakistan.**

*"There is no doubt in my mind that if the Taliban and the al-Qaeda group of people succeed in Afghanistan, that would have catastrophic results for the security and stability, not only of Pakistan, but for the security and stability of all of South Asia. And please don't forget we are talking about nearly 1.8 billion people living in South Asia."*

-MANMOHAN SINGH  
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, have continued to express fears of a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan and another Mumbai-style attack on Indian soil. During a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, Prime Minister Singh further articulated this concern: "There is no doubt in my mind that if the Taliban and the al-Qaeda group of people succeed in Afghanistan, that would have catastrophic results for the security and stability, not only of Pakistan, but for the security and stability of all of South Asia. And please don't forget we are talking about nearly 1.8 billion people living in South Asia."<sup>47</sup>

### THREAT OF A NEW INDO-PAK WAR

While India and Pakistan recently held the first formal talks since the deadly siege of Mumbai in 2008, suspicions remain high, and many areas of contention continue to exist. **For India, the threat of a Pakistani government collapse and the rise of a Taliban-sympathetic or Taliban-linked regime in Islamabad is an existential threat. India would be unable to tolerate the**



**threat of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal in the hands of religious radicals.** The Indian government has long considered the “nuclearization of jihad” to be one of the scenarios that would require Indian military action. In May 2009, the Indian military launched a three-day exercise simulating a “blitzkrieg-type armored incursion, emphasizing rapid penetration into enemy territory” along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab.<sup>48</sup> India is believed to be perfecting a “Cold Start” war strategy to attack Pakistan. This could involve quickly-mounted surgical strikes against terrorist training camps inside Pakistan without the months of military preparation needed for a traditional offensive. Such a scenario would likely bring two nuclear states into direct conflict with potentially dire implications for the wider region.

*In 2008, NATO member countries’ trade volume with Afghanistan and its immediate neighbors totaled \$77.4 billion.*

### THREATS TO TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMIC INTERESTS

**While there exists significant economic relationships between the members of NATO and the countries surrounding Afghanistan, these economic partnerships would suffer greatly should militants regain momentum in Afghanistan and pursue their goal of expanding their presence to Afghanistan’s neighbors.** In 2008, NATO member countries’ trade volume with Afghanistan and its immediate neighbors totaled \$77.4 billion.<sup>49</sup> This large figure does not include NATO members’ trade with China, which shares a very small border with Afghanistan. Afghanistan shares significant borders with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

While Afghanistan receives 7.5% (\$400 million) of its imports from Germany and sends 6.9% (\$41.6 million) of its exports to the Netherlands, the European members of NATO are also heavily involved in the economies of Afghanistan’s neighbors.<sup>50</sup> NATO members Turkey and Germany are major trading partners with Uzbekistan as 5.4% (\$380 million) of Uzbekistan’s imports come from Germany and 4% (\$280 million) of its imports come from Turkey. Furthermore, 7.5% (\$780 million) of Uzbekistan’s exports go to Turkey. Tajikistan also enjoys a very close economic relationship with NATO countries, as its two leading export partners are the Netherlands and Turkey. 36.7% (\$580 million) of Tajikistan’s exports go to the Netherlands while 26.5% (\$420 million) of Tajikistan’s exports go to Turkey. The countries of Central Europe also have close trading relationships with the Central Asian states. Poland and Hungary are respectively the second (10%) (\$1.2 billion) and third (8%) (\$950 million) largest recipients of exports coming from Turkmenistan. In 2008, Hungary and Poland imported over \$2.13 billion worth of goods from Turkmenistan. Turkey provides 13.8% (\$780 million) of Turkmenistan’s imports.<sup>51</sup>

While Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not share a border with Afghanistan, both would undoubtedly experience a destabilizing effect from any increase in regional militancy. The potential for violence to spill over threatens the burgeoning economic relationship between Europe and Kazakhstan. NATO members Germany, Italy, and Romania constitute three of





Kazakhstan's five largest export partners. Germany receives 10.6% (\$7.63 billion), Italy 6.9% (\$4.97 billion), and Romania 6.6% (\$4.75 billion). Germany also is Kazakhstan's third largest import partner, providing 6.2% or \$2.38 billion in exports during 2008. Kazakhstan is also Romania's 8<sup>th</sup> largest source of imports, providing 4.5% (\$2.21 billion) of Romania's imports in 2008. Meanwhile, 6.7% (\$120 million) of Kyrgyzstan's exports go to France while 8.2% (\$310 million) of Kyrgyzstan's imports come from Germany.<sup>52</sup>

## CENTRAL ASIA

The states of Central Asia continue to suffer from a number of problems since gaining independence in 1991, including authoritarianism, corruption, slow-moving economic reforms, and occasional crackdowns on dissent. This has led to an increase in Taliban-inspired extremists, as these problems have been exploited by radical recruiters. **The collapse of Soviet-era institutions and social safety nets has left segments of the populations of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan susceptible to Islamist influence, including pockets of extremism. The situation will deteriorate further if the Taliban are allowed to return to power in Afghanistan.**

### MILITANTS IN TAJIKISTAN

After it achieved independence from the Soviet Union, Tajikistan was engulfed in a civil war between the government and the Islamist-led opposition. The civil war ended in 1997 after 50,000 were people killed and over one-tenth of the population left the country. Jumaboi Khojaev, a future leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), fought in the civil war after being exiled from Uzbekistan. **The IMU has experience operating in Tajikistan and had previously established bases there. In 1999 and 2000, the IMU launched a series of incursions from Tajikistan into Uzbekistan, kidnapping government officials and several foreigners for ransom.**<sup>53</sup> If international pressure on regional extremist activity abates, IMU militants could potentially draw upon this past operational experience to return to Tajikistan and destabilize that country.

### TURKMENISTAN

There have been little to no report of IMU, al-Qaeda, or Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) activity within Turkmenistan's borders. Because of the country's authoritarian government, law enforcement and security agencies maintain a strict hold on all aspects of society and therefore keep the country from turning into a terrorist safe haven.<sup>54</sup> The government, which allows no political dissent or organized opposition, continues to maintain a military-style counterterrorism unit, as well as a Department for the Prevention of Terrorism and Organized Crime in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>55</sup> However, despite these effective counterterrorism measures being taken within the country's own borders, **Turkmen militants continue to operate along side al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region.** If successful in their fight against the Pakistani and Afghan governments they might turn their attention back to their respective home country.

### KAZAKHSTAN

As of 2009, Kazakhstan had 16 groups, the latest being the Islamic Party of Turkistan, placed on its banned terrorist and extremist organization list. Authorities have recently stepped up efforts to



detain and prosecute suspected terrorists as well as enhance cooperation and information sharing with the United States and its allies.<sup>56</sup> In February and March 2008, two courts in Kazakhstan sentenced and imprisoned 23 suspected militants for planning to commit separate terrorist attacks against civilians and government officials inside the country. House searches of the convicts revealed hidden explosives, guns, ammunition, and extremist literature that would have been used to carry out such attacks. Later that year, in November, police detained an Uzbek citizen for allegedly wanting membership within religious extremist, separatist, and fundamentalist organizations.<sup>57</sup>

*“I believe Kyrgyzstan is on the verge of a civil war now...If, God forbid, it started, it will immediately attract terrorists and extremists of all kinds...instead of Kyrgyzstan, an Afghanistan of some years ago can emerge, a different Afghanistan before the military operations there.”*

-DMITRI MEDVEDEV  
PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA<sup>62</sup>

#### KYRGYZSTAN

Under-regulated borders continue to hinder counterterrorism efforts in Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the Batken region, as illicit goods and suspected militants continue to move into and out of the country unmolested. Although the government took political and legislative steps to disrupt terrorist movement in 2008, Kyrgyz law enforcement still lack the proper equipment and manpower to effectively combat terrorist operations in the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan.<sup>58</sup> **The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has also launched periodic attacks against Kyrgyzstan.**<sup>59</sup> Kyrgyzstan’s main Islamist group is Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), a banned

extremist group that supports the establishment of a caliphate and is believed to have approximately 15,000 members in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>60</sup> HT also actively recruits in Europe and was banned by Germany in 2003.<sup>61</sup> Although nonviolent, HT is suspected by Kyrgyz authorities of giving material support to militant groups such as the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.<sup>62</sup> Kyrgyz officials also report a growing support base for and bolder public outreach by HT. **The recent collapse of the Bakiyev government, rising tensions between the north and south, and increased lawlessness within Kyrgyzstan have led to increased concerns regarding Kyrgyzstan’s stability.** Russian President Dmitry Medvedev recently warned that Kyrgyzstan runs the risk of becoming another Afghanistan.<sup>63</sup>

*Uzbek radicals are currently undergoing extensive training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and are fighting alongside the Taliban in the hopes that they can launch a renewed Islamist insurgency in their home country.*

#### UZBEK FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

While the main Uzbek militant group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), was largely driven from Uzbekistan during the 1990s, Uzbek radicals are currently undergoing extensive training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and are fighting alongside the Taliban in the hopes that they can launch a renewed Islamist insurgency in their home country. Uzbek militants have since strengthened their ties to al-Qaeda and, for the first time since 2001, carried out a series of suicide bombings and small-scale attacks against security



forces in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2009. In Pakistan, these Uzbek fighters are known for their ferocity and they have been joined by a number of militant fighters from Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. They have closely modeled their organizations after the Taliban and al-Qaeda. **With thousands of hardened fighters training and sheltered in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, these radical elements seek to destabilize all of Central Asia and spread the Taliban/al-Qaeda vision of an Islamic caliphate that encompasses all of Central Asia and the Western Chinese province of Xinjiang.**<sup>64,65</sup>

*In NATO countries, 10,000 die each year due to heroin overdose. This figure is five times higher than the number of NATO troops killed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan since 2001.*

**Militant groups operating in the region have followers from all of the neighboring countries. Radical Islamist movements throughout Central Asia, as well as in part of China and Russia, would be inspired by a perceived Taliban victory.** They would be able to utilize enlarged safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Separatist Islamist movements throughout the region would be able to create a “drugs-crime-radical Islamist nexus” (such already exists today in part of Russia’s North Caucasus region) resulting in an arc of instability stretching from Chechnya to Xinjiang.<sup>66</sup> Destabilization in this area would have an adverse impact on Europe, Russia, South Asia, and East Asia.

#### DRUG TRAFFICKING

To raise funds for their activities, Uzbek militants have become heavily involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities. **Lawless regions of Central Asia controlled by radical Islamists would provide a safe haven for organized crime and narco-syndicates. Fuelled by the revenue of drug trafficking, black markets, and criminal activity, al-Qaeda would be able to increase financing for its operations.** International attempts to cut off terrorist financing would be overwhelmed, as al-Qaeda and the Taliban would have a major new source of financing. Thirty percent of the world’s opiates currently move through Central Asia. At present, counternarcotics efforts have only managed to intercept five percent of this traffic.<sup>67</sup> Even as these large amounts of narcotics move from Central and South Asia to Europe, the Taliban have found it necessary to warehouse raw opium and heroin to prevent any price disruptions.

*“The Silk Route, turned into a heroin route, is carving out a path of death and violence through one of the world’s most strategic, yet volatile regions...If quick preventive measures are not put into place, a big chunk of Eurasia could be lost – together with its massive energy reserves.”*

-ANTONIO MARIA COSTA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

The vast majority of these drugs head toward users in Europe and Russia. **In NATO countries, 10,000 die each year due to heroin overdose. This figure is five times higher than the number of NATO troops killed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan since 2001.**<sup>68</sup>



This flow of crime, addiction, and death would increase with the destabilization of Central Asia. As Antonio Maria Costa, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime says, “The Silk Route, turned into a heroin route, is carving out a path of death and violence through one of the world’s most strategic, yet volatile regions. . . . If quick preventive measures are not put into place, a big chunk of Eurasia could be lost – together with its massive energy reserves.”<sup>69</sup>

#### THREATS TO EUROPEAN ENERGY INTERESTS

**Increased regional instability will undoubtedly lead to a dramatic decrease in a willingness to invest in energy infrastructure projects in the region. Such a decline in direct foreign investment will hinder any attempts to facilitate a diversification of European energy supplies.**

*Uzbekistan possesses the world’s 14<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves and 54<sup>th</sup> largest oil reserves while Turkmenistan possesses the world’s 4<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves and 43<sup>rd</sup> largest oil reserves. These natural resources and the infrastructure systems to distribute them represent the alternative to a Russian monopoly over European energy supplies.*

Furthermore, there is the possibility that **from bases in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, the Taliban and al-Qaeda could launch attacks that would impact European energy security. Radical forces could strike at the gas and oil fields of Central Asia, and major infrastructure investments such as the Nabucco Pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and their feeder systems would face the threat of disruption or destruction.** Currently, Afghanistan’s neighbors Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan rank high on the list of global energy producers. Uzbekistan possesses the world’s 14<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves and 54<sup>th</sup> largest oil reserves while Turkmenistan possesses the world’s 4<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves and 43<sup>rd</sup> largest oil reserves.<sup>70</sup> These natural resources and the infrastructure systems to distribute them represent the alternative to a Russian monopoly over European energy supplies. **In**

**2007, the 27 EU member states imported 34.0% of their oil and 40.8% of their natural gas from Russia.**<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, for 11 of the 28 NATO members, Russian natural gas makes up a significant portion (40% or higher) of domestic natural gas consumption.<sup>72</sup> **Countries such as Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia rely on Russia for two-thirds to all of their gas consumption.**<sup>73</sup> This Russian leverage over European energy supplies is a key security concern and the development of secure, alternate supplies is vital to NATO and European interests. Europe also imports significant amounts of energy from Kazakhstan, as that country is Europe’s seventh largest oil supplier.<sup>74</sup> The presence of Uzbek and Turkmen militants in the region will only enhance the ability of the extremists to strike at the numerous energy resources in both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



### TERRORIST THREAT TO EUROPE

It has been reported that the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), an Uzbek militant group that broke off from the IMU and has affiliated itself with al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement, has recently begun reaching out to recruit Central Asian, Caucasian, and Turkish Muslims in Turkey and Europe. Turkish communities in Germany have been especially affected. Turks from Germany joined the IJU for training in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area. Later, German converts joined the IJU and were used together with Turks living in Germany to set up an operational cell that plotted an attack on American and German military targets inside Germany. These efforts would likely expand if NATO forces were no longer able to put military pressure on these Uzbek militants.

*It has been reported that the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), affiliated itself with al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement, has recently begun reaching out to recruit Central Asian, Caucasian, and Turkish Muslims in Turkey and Europe.*

### IRAN

**Many Western intelligence agencies believe Iran has begun to enhance its links with militants in Afghanistan,** despite the fact that the majority of Afghan militants are Sunni extremists who despise Shia Islam, and despite the fact that the vast majority of Shiite Iranians loathe the Sunni extremism of the Taliban.

This increased cooperation is due to the hope among elements within the Iranian security apparatus that militants in Afghanistan will serve as a hedge against their mutual Western enemies. As Iran faces mounting international pressure on its nuclear program and increased internal dissent, it is more likely to continue to retain these ties to extremists in Afghanistan. Over the last three years, NATO forces have intercepted several convoys of suspected Iranian weapons destined for Afghanistan. Should any military action be taken against Iran's nuclear program, Iran could potentially entice these extremist allies to attack Western targets. A NATO success in Afghanistan would deny the Iranian regime a proxy that could be used against Western targets as a point of leverage in the confrontation over Iran's nuclear program. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also recently visited Kabul in March. Some analysts believe that Tehran will attempt to establish its influence in Afghanistan following a Western withdrawal.

## WIDER POLITICAL AND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

**Failure in Afghanistan would raise concerns about the willingness of American and European nations to address major international security crises.** The failure of the Western world to muster the political will to adequately respond to a major security threat will invite further instability.



Nations and groups that thrive on instability will be emboldened by the perception that the largest military alliance and economic relationship in the world is unable to confront the security challenges raised by the nexus of radical ideologies and failed states.

*Nations and groups that thrive on instability will be emboldened by the perception that the largest military alliance and economic relationship in the world is unable to confront the security challenges raised by the nexus of radical ideologies and failed states.*

While the United States was able to maintain its leadership position following its defeat in Vietnam and withdrawals from Lebanon and Somalia, the circumstances have changed with the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and the rise of powers such as Brazil, China, and India.

**Failure in Afghanistan will also raise questions about the ability of Europe to act in matters of global security.** Already burdened by the challenges

of the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of pan-European institutions, the inability to respond to a major security challenge will raise concerns about the ability of European political leadership and European collective action.<sup>75</sup>

## DAMAGE TO THE FUTURE OF NATO AND TRANSATLANTIC UNITY

*“Our common security is closely tied to the stability and security of Afghanistan and the region: an area of the world from where extremists planned attacks against civilian populations and democratic governments and continue to plot today...For this reason Afghanistan remains the Alliance’s key priority.”*

*-2009 NATO Summit Declaration on Afghanistan*

*“NATO remains an indispensable alliance, the essential embodiment of the transatlantic relationship and the ultimate guarantor of our collective security...United States support for NATO is fundamental to the continued existence of the Alliance; without it NATO would become redundant. To remain relevant to the United States and to demonstrate that relevance to the American people, the Alliance must be capable of tackling today’s and tomorrow’s security challenges. To do so, NATO must become more capable, more deployable and more flexible, and the European Allies together need to demonstrate clearly what they contribute to NATO.”*

*-United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee<sup>76</sup>*

If the NATO alliance cannot succeed in a mission for which it has invoked Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, the existence and purpose of the Alliance will inevitably come into

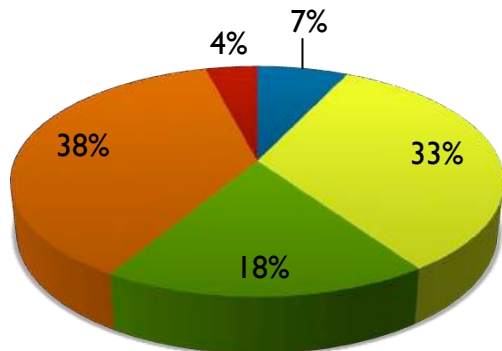


question. In an era without the Cold War threat of the Warsaw Pact, the utility of the transatlantic alliance will be determined by how it responds to the rise of new security threats.

Already weakened by a war effort that is under-resourced and hampered by politically driven caveats, the NATO alliance would face a barrage of criticism following defeat in Afghanistan.<sup>77</sup> If leaders in the United States see greater utility in “coalitions of the willing,” the transatlantic relationship will develop into a two-tier system between those countries that participate and those that do not. For example, some particularly casualty-adverse nations even refuse to undertake reconstruction missions unless security is firmly established.<sup>78</sup> Already, the American public harbors a growing perception that their European allies are becoming security consumers and not security providers. In a recent poll by the German Marshall Fund, 58 percent of Europeans said they viewed NATO as being essential for security, but only 7 percent supported sending more troops to Afghanistan.<sup>79</sup> The same poll showed that American support for closer transatlantic ties has dropped dramatically since 2004. Without greater burden-sharing in Afghanistan, the future of NATO is in doubt.

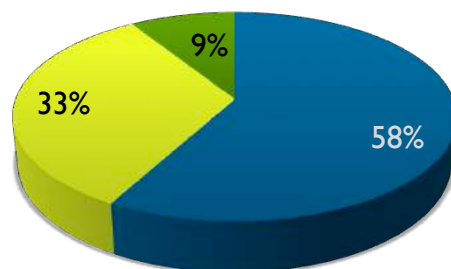
*“The biggest loss that would come from a failed state in Afghanistan would be the end of NATO as we know it...NATO’s reputation is on the line.”*  
 -SENATOR LINDSAY GRAHAM (R-SC)  
 SPEAKING AT THE ROLLOUT OF CSPC’S EARLIER REPORT: MOBILIZING NATO FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: AN ASSESSMENT OF ALLIANCE CAPABILITIES

EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS TROOP LEVELS



- DEPLOY MORE
- MAINTAIN LEVELS
- REDUCE
- WITHDRAW
- DON'T KNOW

EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS NATO



- STILL ESSENTIAL
- NO LONGER ESSENTIAL
- DON'T KNOW

Unfortunately, many are complacently looking to the Strategic Concept exercise led by Madeleine Albright to address NATO’s problems. This effort is important, but far too long-range to address the immediate challenges. The Strategic Concept is scheduled to release its findings



sometime in 2011 and may be used by some as an excuse for delaying reforms. Its slow-moving deliberations are disconnected from events in Afghanistan.

Alliance members must understand that the kind of future envisioned by the new Strategic Concept will never come into being if there is a dramatic breakdown over Afghanistan. At a recent meeting on NATO's new Strategic Concept, Defense Secretary Robert Gates rightly warned that if immediate reforms are not enacted, the new Strategic Concept would not be worth the scrap of paper it was written on.

This decline in the transatlantic relationship will come at a time when the economic and political power of the world appears to be shifting towards Asia. The transatlantic relationship is the largest alliance of democracies in history; it constitutes 66 percent of the world's capital markets, produces 45 percent of the world's GDP, and has 3.5 million members in its armed forces. If it cannot effectively mobilize these resources to confront a clear security threat, the balance of world power will shift to the Pacific.





## APPENDIX A: EXPLANATION OF ACRONYMS

AIVD = Algemene Inlichtingen-en Veiligheidsdienst (General Intelligence and Security Service, the Netherlands)  
CENTCOM = U.S. Military Central Command  
EU = European Union  
FATA = Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan  
IDP = Internally Displaced Person  
IJU = Islamic Jihad Union  
IMU = Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan  
ISI = Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistani Military Intelligence)  
JeM = Jaish-e-Mohammed (The Army of Mohammed)  
LeT = Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Righteous)  
NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NWFP = Northwest Frontier Provinces, Pakistan  
TeT = Tehrik-e-Taliban (the Pakistani Taliban)



## MOBILIZING NATO IN AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN: ENSURING THE ALLIANCE'S FUTURE

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