

## Preface

This monograph is an intellectual primer on war in Afghanistan. I come to this task through a string of accidents that has kept me involved with war in Afghanistan as a Soldier and an academic for over 30 years. It began in graduate school at Columbia University in New York City, where I was privileged to study with some of the Nation's greatest experts on the Soviet Union and Central Europe, and with another superb crew of scholars on war and peace issues. These interests came together with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

From 1980 to 1984, I worked on my dissertation on the Soviet invasion under the guidance of two consummate professionals: Professors Marshall Shulman, the former Advisor to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on Soviet affairs; and Zalmay Khalilzad, a young academic strategist who later became a colleague in the Pentagon and still later Ambassador to Afghanistan, his boyhood home, and then to Iraq. Three colleagues at West Point were very helpful in my study of Afghanistan: then-Colonel Ty Cobb, my boss, and a future senior director on the National Security Council (NSC) staff; Visiting Professor Jerry Hudson, a superb Soviet expert and a demanding coach; and the late Louis Dupree, the world's leading Afghanistan specialist, a scholar with a soldier's heart. David Isby and Bill Olson have also been friends and tutors on Southwest Asia since 1980. My former student and Army colleague Tom Lynch has joined their ranks and has been especially helpful on the issue of modern-day Pakistan.

Sadly, a few years after leaving Columbia and my concurrent teaching tour in the Department of Social Sciences at West Point, I watched the Afghan war with the Soviet Union end, only to be replaced by a civil war, then a war against the Taliban, and then a war prosecuted by

the Taliban and al Qaeda against the Northern Alliance. As a result of this endless war, Afghanistan has become one of the most devastated countries on Earth.

In 2001, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations (2001–2004), I was privileged to lead a team of Pentagon policy experts who worked a key part of the Pentagon's Afghanistan portfolio. Inside the Pentagon, we took our orders from Under Secretary Doug Feith and worked closely with his deputy, Bill Luti, and later the Defense Department's senior reconstruction and stabilization coordinator Dov Zakheim, the department's comptroller. My team interacted with an active and productive interagency effort led by Ambassador Bill Taylor, and later the NSC staff's Tony Harriman. In my seven trips to the region, the devastation of the country and the difficulty of counterinsurgency stood out starkly. On my last trip, I flew home next to the gurney of a severely wounded paratrooper from the Alaska-based 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) of 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The severity of his wounds and the devotion of his Air Force medics were vivid reminders of the costs of this war and the continuing sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

I returned to academic life in 2004 and now teach at the National War College, where I have been engaged in a full-time study of war on the low end of the conflict spectrum. Teaching remains the ultimate learning experience, and this monograph owes much to the intellectual stimulation my students provide. It could not have come about without the help of many people. I would like to thank Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, USN, President of the National Defense University, and Major General Robert Steel, USAF, then-Commandant of the National War College, for allowing me a sabbatical to complete this and other projects. My colleagues, Dan Caldwell of Pepperdine University; Jacqueline

Hazelton of Harvard University's Belfer Center; Daniel Weggeland, a veteran of service in Afghanistan on the development and counterinsurgency fronts; Colonel Vince Dreyer, USA, an Afghanistan veteran turned academic expert; former Ambassador Ron Neumann; Jeff Hayes of the NSC staff; and Lieutenant Colonel Jason Boehm, USMC, of the Joint Staff, and Liz Packard of U.S. Central Command read the manuscript and made great suggestions. Special thanks go to Admiral James Stavridis, Supreme Allied Commander Europe. He, Colonel Mike Howard, USA, and others at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe made many insightful comments on the manuscript. General Peter Chiarelli, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and Lieutenant General Chuck Jacoby, the Joint Staff, J5, were supportive throughout. As always, the creative team at NDU Press added immeasurably to the final product.

My wife Anita, along with my sons Joseph and Jude and their families, are my life and my moral support. They join me in dedicating this monograph to the military personnel, diplomats, and civil servants who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. To paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill, as we approach the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, never have so many Americans owed so much to so few of their countrymen. As always, despite all of this support and assistance, any mistakes in this monograph are my own.