



About the Author

Dr. Joseph J. Collins is currently Professor of Strategy at the National War College in Washington, DC. From 2001 to 2004, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations and very active in plans and policy for the war in Afghanistan, as well as in the initial planning for Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. A retired Army colonel, he is a veteran of over a decade's service in the Pentagon, and has taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Georgetown University, and Columbia University. Professor Collins's many publications include books on the study of Soviet policy toward Afghanistan, international relations theory, and U.S. military culture. He has spent the last few years teaching and writing on the war in Afghanistan. Professor Collins is also the author of *Choosing War: The Decision to Invade Iraq and Its Aftermath* (NDU Press, 2008). A life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, he holds a doctorate in Political Science from Columbia University.

“Understanding War in Afghanistan is an excellent primer on a hugely complex conflict. Joseph Collins—a veteran Afghan watcher, National War College professor, and respected strategist—guides the reader expertly through the geography, history, and recent dynamics of Afghanistan, providing a superb foundation for understanding the evolution of the effort here. He concludes with a nuanced analysis of the current situation and considerations for conflict termination. Professor Collins’ book is an outstanding work for soldiers and diplomats deploying for their first tour in the shadow of the Hindu Kush; those with extensive time on the ground will find the annotated bibliography full of excellent suggestions for further study.”

—General David H. Petraeus
Commander
International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan

“Understanding War in Afghanistan is an excellent book for journeyman students of Afghanistan. Not only does it give them a summary of Afghanistan’s colorful geography and history, but it also presents an up-to-date picture of where the war is heading and an informed discussion of the range of choice for Afghanistan and its allies. This book is a great introduction to a difficult subject, a must read for diplomats and military officers on their first tour in South Asia.”

—Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN

“Professor Collins has combined mastery of the Afghan experience and great strategic insight to produce the essential primer for the campaign in Afghanistan. His analysis clarifies the key Afghan issues, the warfighting experiences of the major combatants, and the regional dynamics needed to develop options for this long campaign. His perspective establishes the baseline needed by every American who will serve in Afghanistan or play a role in the execution of future U.S. policy in that crucial region of the world.”

—John R. Ballard, Ph.D.
Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs
National War College

“This is the required text for ‘Afghanistan 101’—a primer that skillfully explains the realities of a complicated country and America’s longest war. It is written in a clear, informative way that is accessible to citizens, students, and civilian and military personnel who want or need to learn more about one of the most important issues of our time. Highly recommended.”

—Dan Caldwell
Distinguished Professor, Pepperdine University
Author of *Vortex of Conflict: U.S. Policy Toward Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq*

