

## Appendix G

### The US Military Campaign in Afghanistan

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From the very moment of the September 11 attacks, suspicion turned toward al-Qaida, whose leadership and training bases were under the protection of the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan. From the outset, the US Government was faced with the need to overcome the Taliban in order to disrupt further al-Qaida activities. The President determined that this called for military action on a grand scale.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM), under the command of General Tommy Franks, set to work developing a plan and assembling forces to carry out actions in Afghanistan, which was located in the area of the world under CENTCOM's purview. First priority went to eliminating the Taliban's air defense, command and control, and mobility capabilities. On 7 October, assisted by Special Operations teams spirited into the country to identify targets, Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft began systematically and surgically destroying Taliban and al-Qaida warfighting equipment and positions. In a parallel effort, the United States soon began delivering the first of what was to become over two million humanitarian daily rations to alleviate the suffering of Afghans beyond reach of food supplies.

From the very beginning, the United States was joined in its war against global terrorism by other countries who saw the events of September 11 as an attack on their own way of life. Countries around the globe offered military and other assets to the growing antiterrorism Coalition. By year's end, forces from 55 countries, including some from the Muslim world, had augmented US forces in the effort to subdue al-Qaida and the Taliban. Each member brought to the Coalition a unique contribution of military assets and expertise.

The focus of the bombing campaign gradually shifted from destroying al-Qaida and Taliban equipment and facilities to disrupting the ground forces opposing the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. On 10 November, Northern Alliance troops entered the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, signaling the end of Taliban control over the northern provinces. In the following days, the Taliban military forces in most of the country collapsed, many of them fleeing toward the southern city of Kandahar, where the Taliban originated. On 13 November, Northern Alliance forces entered the capital city of Kabul unopposed.

Although US Army Rangers had raided a Taliban command-and-control site near Kandahar as early as 19 October, the United States generally restricted its ground combat units to roles that did not involve assaults against fixed Taliban positions. On 26 November, US Marines established an operating base southwest of Kandahar and began conducting patrols aimed at preventing the escape of al-Qaida and Taliban leaders. Kandahar, the last city held by the Taliban, finally succumbed to pressure from incessant Coalition bombing and ground action by anti-Taliban Afghan forces on 6 December. Taliban leader Mullah Omar, however, was able to escape.

Meanwhile, Coalition and Afghan forces were searching for al-Qaida leader Usama Bin Ladin in a cave-riddled stronghold in the mountains near Tora Bora, along Afghanistan's border with Pakistan. After a tough, uphill, cave-by-cave battle, Tora Bora was finally subdued, but Bin Ladin, for the moment, also had evaded capture.

In the following weeks, anti-Taliban forces throughout Afghanistan continued to pursue the remaining Taliban and al-Qaida forces, capturing over 5,000 of them. Those identified as of special interest to the United States—key Taliban and al-Qaida leaders—were moved to US-controlled detention facilities to await further disposition.

On 26 November, representatives of numerous Afghan factions met in Bonn to negotiate a governing agreement. The resulting Afghan Interim Authority took office in Kabul on 22 December. To provide security for the nascent Afghan Government, several countries contributed forces to the British-led International Security Assistance Force established under the auspices of UN Security Council Resolution 1386 of 20 December.

The message of the successful military action in Afghanistan to persons bent on using terrorism to achieve their international objectives is clear: the United States will act swiftly and relentlessly, with worldwide reach, to pursue and eliminate them.